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RICHARD STRAUSS

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STRAUSS was never the fine, the perfect artist. Even in the first flare of youth, even at the time when he was the meteoric dazzling figure flaunting over all the bald pates of the universe the standard of the musical future, it was apparent that there were serious flaws in his spirit. Despite the audacity with which he realized his amazing and poignant and ironic visions, despite his youthful fire and exuberance—and it was as something of a golden youth of music that Strauss burst upon the world—one sensed in him the not quite beautifully deepened man, heard at moments a callow and plebeian accent in his eloquence, felt that an unmistakable alloy was fused with the generous gold. The purity, the inwardness, the searchings of the heart, the great religious sentiment of beauty, present so unmistakably in the art of the great men who had developed music, were wanting in his work. He had neither the unswerving sense of style, nor the felicity of touch, that mark the perfect craftsman. He was not a scrupulous or exacting artist. It was apparent that he was careless, too easily contented with thematic material, not always happy in his detail. Mixed with his fire there was a sort of laziness and indifference. But, in those days, Strauss was unmistakably the genius, the original and bitingly expressive musician, the engineer of proud orchestral flights, the outrider and bannerman of his art, and one forgave his shortcomings because of the radiance of his figure, or remained only half-conscious of them.

For, once his period of apprenticeship passed, and all desire to write symphonies and chamber music in the styles of Schumann and Mendelssohn and Brahms, to construct operas after the pattern of

Tannhäuser and Parsifal, had gone out of him, this slender sleepy young Bavarian with the pale curly hair and moustaches had commenced to develop the expressive power of music amazingly, was making the orchestra speak wonderfully as it had never spoken before. Under his touch the symphony, that most rigid and abstract and venerable of forms, was actually displaying some of the novel's narrative and analytical power, its literalness and concreteness of detail. It was describing the developments of a character, was psychologizing as it had hitherto done only in conjunction with poetry or the theatre. Strauss had made it represent the inflammations of the sex illusion, comment on Nietzsche and Cervantes, recount the adventures, somersaults, and end of a legendary rascal, portray a hero of our time. He had made all these intellectual concepts plastic in a music of a brilliance and a sprightliness and mordancy that not many classic symphonies can rival. Other and former composers, no doubt, had dreamt of making the orchestra more concretely expressive, more precisely narrative and descriptive. The Pastoral Symphony is by no means the first piece of deliberately, confessedly programmatic music. And before Strauss, both Berlioz and Liszt had experimented with the narrative, descriptive, analytical symphony. But it was only with Strauss that the symphonic novel was finally realized.

Neither Berlioz nor Liszt had really embodied their programmes in living music. Liszt invariably sacrificed programme to sanctioned musical form. For all his radicalism, he was too trammelled by the classical concepts, the traditional musical schemes and patterns to quite realize the symphony based on an extra-musical scheme. His symphonic poems reveal how difficult it was for him to make his music follow the curve of his ideas. In *Die Ideale*, for instance, for the sake of a conventional close, he departed entirely from the curve of the poem of Schiller which he was pretending to transmute. The variations in which he reproduced Lamartine's verse are stereotyped enough. When was there a time when composers did not deform their themes into amorous, rustic, and warlike variations? The relation between the pompous and somewhat empty Lament and Triumph and the unique, the distinct thing that was the life of Torquato Tasso, is outward enough. And even the *Mazeppa*, in which Liszt's virtuosic genius stood him in good stead, makes one feel as though Liszt could never quite keep his eye on the fact, and become finally

engrossed in the weaving of a musical pattern fairly extraneous to his idea. The Faust Symphony is, after all, an exception. Berlioz, too, failed on the whole to achieve the musical novel. Whenever he did attain musical form, it was generally at the expense of his programme. Are the somewhat picturesque episodes of Harold in Italy, whatever their virtues—and they are many—anything but vaguely related to the Byronism that ostensibly elemented them? The surprisingly conventional overture to King Lear makes one feel as though Berlioz had sat through a performance of one of Shakespeare's comedies under the impression that he was assisting at the tragedy, so unrelated to its subject is the music. And where, on the other hand, Berlioz did succeed in being regardful of his programme, as in the *Symphonie Fantastique*, or in *Lelio*, there resulted a somewhat thin and formless music, a music without much intrinsic value.

But Strauss, benefiting by the experiments of his two predecessors, realized the new form better than any one before him had done. For he possessed the special gifts necessary to the performance of the task. He possessed, in the first place, a miraculous power of musical characterization. Through the representative nicety of his themes, through his inordinate capacity for thematic variation and transformation, his playful and witty and colourful instrumentation, Strauss was able to impart to his music a concreteness and descriptiveness and realism hitherto unknown to symphonic art, to characterize briefly, sparingly, justly, a personage, a situation, an event. He could be pathetic, ironic, playful, mordant, musing, at will. He was sure in his tone, was low-German in *Till Eulenspiegel*, courtly and brilliant in *Don Juan*, noble and bitterly sarcastic in *Don Quixote*, childlike in *Tod und Verklärung*. His orchestra was able to accommodate itself to all the folds and curves of his elaborate programmes, to find equivalents for individual traits. It is not simply "a man," nor even "an amatory hero," that is portrayed in *Don Juan*. It is no vague symbol for the poet of the sort created by Orpheus or Tasso or Mazeppa. It is Lenau's hero himself, the particular being *Don Juan Tenorio*. The vibrant brilliant music of the up-surge light-treading strings, of the resonant palpitating brass, springs forth with a lithe, virile march, reveals the man himself, his physical glamour, his intoxication that caused him to see in every woman the Venus, and that in the end made him the victim as

well as the hero of the sexual life. It is Till Eulenspiegel himself, the scurvy comic rascal, the eternal dirty little boy with his witty and obscene gestures, who leers out of every measure of the tone-poem named for him, and twirls his fingers at his nose's end at all the decorous and respectable world. Here, for once, orchestral music is really wonderfully rascally and impudent, horns gleeful and windy and insolent, wood-wind puckish and obscene. Here, a musical form reels hilariously and cuts capers and dances on bald heads. The variation of Don Quixote that describes with wood-wind and tambourine Dulcinea del Toboso is plump and plebeian and good-natured with her very person, is all the more trenchantly stupid and flat for the preceding suave variation that describes the knight's fair, sonorous radiant dream of her. There is no music more plaintively stupid than that which in the same work figures the "sheep" against which Don Quixote battles so valiantly. Nor is there any music more maliciously, malevolently petty than that which represents the adversaries in *Ein Heldenleben*. So exceedingly definite is the portrait of the Hero's Consort, for which Frau Richard Strauss, without doubt, sat, that one can aver without even having seen a photograph of the lady that she is graced with a diatonic figure. And certainly the most amusing passage of the *Sinfonia Domestica* is that complex of Bavarian lustihood, Bavarian grossness, Bavarian dreaminess, and Bavarian good nature, the thematic group that serves as auto-portrait of the composer.

And just as there seemed few characters that Strauss could not paint, in those days, so too there seemed few situations, few atmospheres, to which he could not do justice. A couple of measures, the sinister palpitation of the timpani and the violas, the brooding of the wood-wind, the dull flickering of the flutes, the labouring breath of the strings, and we are lying on the death-bed, exhausted and gasping for air, weighed by the wrecks of hopes, awaiting the cruel blows on the heart that will end everything. Horns and violins quaver and snarl, flutes shrill, a brief figure descends in the oboes and clarinets, and Till has shed his rascal-sweat and danced on the air. The orchestra reveals us Don Juan's love affairs in all their individuality: first the passionate fiery relation with the Countess, quickly begun and quickly ended; then the gentler and more inward communion with Anna, with the boredom resulting from the lady's continual demand for sentiment and romantic posturing; then the great night of love

and roses, with its intoxicated golden winding horns, its ecstatically singing violins; and finally the crushing disappointment, the shudder of disgust. The battle in *Ein Heldenleben* pictures war really; the whistling ironical wind-machine in *Don Quixote* satirizes dreams biting as no music has done; the orchestra describes the enthusiastic Don recovering from his madness, and smiles a conclusion; in *Also Sprach Zarathustra* it piles high the tomes of science and waltzes with the superman in distant worlds.

And then, though less fecund an inventor than Liszt, less rich and large a temperament than Berlioz, Strauss was better able than either of his masters to organize his material on difficult and original lines, and find musical forms representative of his programmes. Because of their labours, he was born freer of the classical traditions than they had been, and was able to make music plot more exactly the curves of his concepts, and to submit the older forms, such as the rondo and the theme and variations, more perfectly to his purpose. Compositions of the sort of *Till Eulenspiegel*, *Tod und Verklärung*, and *Ein Heldenleben* are both solidly made and yet narrative and dramatic, place the symphonic poem in the category of legitimate musical forms. The themes of *Till* grow out of each other quite as do the themes of a Beethoven symphony or of *Tristan* or of *Parsifal*. Indeed, Strauss has done for the symphonic poem something of what Wagner did for the opera. And not an overwhelming number of classical symphonies contain music more eloquent than, say, the "sunrise" in *Also Sprach Zarathustra*, or the final variation of *Don Quixote* with its piercing shattering trumpets of defeat, or the terrifying opening passage of *Tod und Verklärung*. For Strauss was able to unloose his verve and fantasy completely in the construction of his edifices. His orchestra moves in strangest and most unconventional curves, shoots with the violence of an exploding firearm, ambles like a palfrey, swoops like a bird. There are few who, at a first hearing of a Strauss poem, do not feel as though some wild and troubling and panic presence had leaned over the concert hall and bedevilled the orchestra. For, in his hands, it is no longer the familiar and terrorless thing it once had been, a thing about whose behaviour one could be certain. It has become a formidable engine of steel and gold, vibrant with mad and unexpected things. Patterns leap and tumble out of it. Violin music launches swiftly into space, trumpets run scales, the tempi move with the velocity of

express trains. It has become a giant terrible bird, the great auk of music, that seizes you in its talons and spirals into the empyrean.

But it was what he seemed to promise to perform, to bring into being, that, even more than what he had already definitely accomplished, spread about the figure of Strauss the peculiar radiance. It was Nietzsche who had made current the dream of a new music, a music that should be fiercely and beautifully animal, full of laughter, of the dry good light of the intellect, of "salt and fire and the great compelling logic, of the light feet of the south, the dance of the stars, the quivering dayshine of the Mediterranean." The other composers, the Beethovens and Brahmses and Wagners, had been sad, suffering, wounded men, men who had lost their divine innocence and joy in the shambles, and whose spiritual bodies were scarred, for all the muscular strength gained during their fights, by hunger and frustration and agony. Pain has even marred their song. For what should have been innocence and effortless movement and god-like joy, Mozartean coordination and harmony, was full of terrible cries and convulsive rending motions and shrouding sorrow. And Nietzsche had dreamt of music of another sort. He had dreamt of a music that should be a bridge to the Superman, the man whose every motion would be beautiful. He had seen striding across mountain chains in the bright air of an eternal morning a youth irradiant with unbroken energy before whom all the world lay open in vernal sunshine like a domain before its lord. He had seen one beside whom the other musicians would stand as convicts from Siberian prison camps, who had stumbled upon a banquet of the gods, might stand. He had seen a young Titan of music, drunken with life and fire and joy, dancing and reeling and laughing on the top of the world, and with fingers amid the stars, sending suns and constellations crashing. He had caught sight of the old and eternally youthful figure of Indian Dionysos.

And even though Strauss himself could scarcely be mistaken for the god, nevertheless, he made Nietzsche's dream appear realizable. He permitted one for an instant to perceive a musical realm in which the earth-fast could not breathe. He permitted one for an instant to hear ringing "the prelude of a deeper, stronger music, perhaps a more wayward and mysterious music; a music which is super-German and which, unlike other music, would not die away, nor pale, nor grow dull beside the blue and wanton sea and the clear

Mediterranean. It has become a giant terrible bird, the great auk of music, that seizes you in its talons and spirals into the empyrean. But it was what he seemed to promise to perform, to bring into being, that, even more than what he had already definitely accomplished, spread about the figure of Strauss the peculiar radiance. It was Nietzsche who had made current the dream of a new music, a music that should be fiercely and beautifully animal, full of laughter, of the dry good light of the intellect, of "salt and fire and the great compelling logic, of the light feet of the south, the dance of the stars, the quivering dayshine of the Mediterranean." The other composers, the Beethovens and Brahmses and Wagners, had been sad, suffering, wounded men, men who had lost their divine innocence and joy in the shambles, and whose spiritual bodies were scarred, for all the muscular strength gained during their fights, by hunger and frustration and agony. Pain has even marred their song. For what should have been innocence and effortless movement and god-like joy, Mozartean coordination and harmony, was full of terrible cries and convulsive rending motions and shrouding sorrow. And Nietzsche had dreamt of music of another sort. He had dreamt of a music that should be a bridge to the Superman, the man whose every motion would be beautiful. He had seen striding across mountain chains in the bright air of an eternal morning a youth irradiant with unbroken energy before whom all the world lay open in vernal sunshine like a domain before its lord. He had seen one beside whom the other musicians would stand as convicts from Siberian prison camps, who had stumbled upon a banquet of the gods, might stand. He had seen a young Titan of music, drunken with life and fire and joy, dancing and reeling and laughing on the top of the world, and with fingers amid the stars, sending suns and constellations crashing. He had caught sight of the old and eternally youthful figure of Indian Dionysos.

Mediterranean sky; a music super-European, which would hold its own even by the dark sunsets of the desert; a music whose soul is akin to the palm-trees; a music that knows how to live and move among great beasts of prey, beautiful and solitary; a music whose supreme charm is its ignorance of good and evil." For he came with some of the light and careless and arrogant tread, the intellectual sparkling, the superb gesture and port, of the musician of the new race. The man who composed such music, one knew, had been born on some sort of human height, in some cooler, brighter atmosphere than that of the crowded valleys. For in this music there beat a faster pulse, moved a lighter, fierier, prouder body, sounded a more ironic and disdainful laughter, breathed a rarer air, than had beat and moved and sounded and breathed in music. It made drunken with pleasant sound, with full rich harmonies, with exuberant dance and waltz movements. It seemed to adumbrate the arrival of a new sort of man, men of saner, sounder, more athletic souls and more robust and cool intelligence, a generation that was vitally satisfied, was less torn and belaboured by the inexpressible longings of the romantic world, a generation very much at home on the globe. For it had none of the restless, sick desire of Wagner, none of his excessive pathos, his heaviness and stiff grandeur. It had come down off its buskins, was more easy, witty, diverting, exciting, popular and yet cerebral. Though it was obviously the speech of a complicated modern man, self-conscious, sophisticated, nervous, product of a society perhaps not quite so free and Nietzschean as it deemed itself, but yet cultivated and illuminated and refined, it nevertheless seemed healthful and good. The sweet broad diatonic idiom, the humour, the sleepy Bavarian accent, the pert, naive little folk-tunes it employed, the tranquil touching childlike tones, the close of *Tod und Verklärung*, with its wondrous unfolding of *corolla upon corolla*, were refreshing indeed after all the burning chromaticism of Wagner, the sultry air of Klingsor's wonder-garden.

And this music glittered with the sun. The pitch of Wagner's orchestra had after all been predominantly sober and subdued. But in the orchestra of Strauss, the colour-gamut of the plein-air painters got a musical equivalent. Those high and brilliant tints, these shimmering, biting tones, make one feel as though Strauss made music with the paint brush of a Monet or a Van Gogh. His trumpets are high and brilliant and silvery, his violins scintillant and

electric, at moments winding a lazy, happy smoke-blue thread through the sunburnt fabric of the score. His horns glow with soft fruity timbres. The new sweetness of colour which he attains in his songs, the pale gold of *Morgen*, the rose of the *Serenade*, the mild evening blue of *Traum Durch die Dämmerung*, shimmers throughout his orchestra scores. Never have wind instruments sounded more richly, dulcetly, than in that *Serenade für Dreizehn Bläser*. At a first hearing of *Also Sprach Zarathustra*, it seemed as though the very dayspring had descended into the orchestra to make that famous brassy opening passage. For here, in the band of Strauss, the orchestra begins to round out its form and assume its logical shape. The various families of instruments are made independent; often play separately. The shattering brass of which Berlioz had dreamt is realized. Violas da more, haeckelphones, wind-machines are introduced into the band; the familiar instruments are used in unfamiliar registers. Through the tone-poems of Strauss, the orchestral composer for the first time has a suitable palette, and can achieve a brilliance quite as great as that which the modern painter can attain.

To-day, it is difficult to realize that Richard Strauss ever incensed such high hopes, that there was a time when he made appear realizable Nietzsche's mad dream of a modern music, and that for a while the nimbus of Dionysos burned round his figure. To-day, it is difficult to remember that once upon a time Strauss seemed to the world the golden youth of music, the engineer of proud orchestral flights, the outrider and bannerman of his art. For it is long since he has promised to reveal the new beauty, the new rhythm, has seemed the wonderful start and flight toward some rarer plane of existence, some bluer aether, the friend of everything intrepid and living and young, the "arrow of longing for the Superman." It is a long while since any gracious lordly light has irradiated his person. In recent years, he has become almost the very reverse of what he was, of what he gave so brave an earnest of becoming. He who was once so electric, so vital, so brilliant a figure, has become dreary and outward and stupid, even. He who once seemed the champion of the new, has come to fill us with the weariness of the struggle, with deep self-distrust and discouragement, has become a heavy and oppressive weight. He who once sought to express the world about him, to be the poet of the coming time, now seems inspired only by a desire to

do the amazing, the surface thing, and plies himself to every ephemeral and shallow current of modern life. For Strauss has not only not deepened and matured and increased in stature. He has not even stood still, remained the artist that once he was. He has progressively and steadily deteriorated during the last decade. He has become a bad musician. He is the cruel, the great disappointment of modern music, of modern art. The dream-light has failed altogether, has made the succeeding darkness the thicker for the momentary illumination. Strauss to-day is seen as a rocket that sizzled up into the sky with manicoloured blaze, and then broke suddenly, and extinguished swiftly into the midnight.

It is not easy, even for those who were aware from the very first that Strauss was not the spirit "pardlike, beautiful and swift," and that there always were distinctly gross and insensitive particles in him, to recognize in the slack and listless person who concocts Joseph's *Legende* and the *Alpensymphonie*, the young and fiery composer, genius despite all the impurities of his style, who composed *Till Eulenspiegel* and *Don Quixote*; not easy, even though the contours of his idiom have not radically altered, and though in the sleepy facile periods of his later style one catches sight at times of the broad simple diction of his earlier. For the later Strauss lacks preeminently and signally just the traits that made of the earlier so brilliant and engaging a figure. Behind the works of the earlier Strauss there was visible an intensely, fierily experiencing being, a man who had powerful and poignant and beautiful sensations, and the gift of expressing them richly. Behind the work of the latter there is all too apparent a man who for a long while has felt nothing beautiful or strong or full, who no longer possesses the power of feeling anything at all, and is inwardly wasted and dull and spent. The one had a burning and wonderful pressure of speech. The other seems unable to concentrate energy and interest sufficiently to create a hard and living piece of work. The one seemed to blaze new pathways through the brain. The other steps languidly in roadways well worn. He is not even amusing any longer. The contriver of wonderful orchestral machines, the man who penetrated into the death-chamber and stood under the gibbet, has turned to toying with his medium, to imitating other composers, Mozart in *Der Rosenkavalier*, Haendel in *Joseph's Legende*, Offenbach and Lulli (a coupling that only Strauss has the lack of taste to bring about) in

Ariadne auf Naxos. He has become increasingly facile and unoriginal, has taken to quoting, unblushingly, Mendelssohn, Tchaikowsky, Wagner, even himself. His insensitivity has waxed inordinately, and led him to mix styles, to commingle dramatic and coloratura passages, to jumble the idioms of three centuries in a single work, to play all manner of pointless pranks with his art. His literary taste has grown increasingly uncertain. He who was once so careful in his choice of lyrics, and recognized the talents of such modern German poets as Birnham and Dehmel and Mackay, accepts librettos as dull and inartistic and precious as those with which Hofmannsthal is supplying him, and lends his art to the boring buffooneries of *Der Rosenkavalier* and *Ariadne auf Naxos*. Something in him has bent and been fouled and broken.

One thing at least the Strauss of the tone-poems indisputably was. He was freely, dazzlingly, daringly expressive. And this is what the Strauss of the last years thinly and rarely is. It is not Oscar Wilde's wax flowers of speech, nor the excessively conventionalized and stylized action of *Salome*, that bores one with Strauss's opera of that name. It is not even the libretto of *Der Rosenkavalier*, essentially coarse and boorish and insensitive as it is beneath all its powdered preciousness, that wearies one with Strauss's "Musical Comedy," or the hybrid, lame, tasteless form of *Ariadne auf Naxos* that turns one against that little monstrosity. It is the generally inexpressive and insufficient music in which Strauss has vested them. The music of *Salome*, for instance, is not even commensurable with Wilde's drama. It was the evacuation of an obsessive desire, the revulsion from a pitiless sensuality, that the poet had intended to procure through this representation. But Strauss's music, save in such exceptional passages as the shimmering, restless, nerve-sick opening page, or the beginning of the scene with the head, or certain other crimson patches, hampers and even negates the intended effect. It emasculates the drama with its pervasive prettiness, its lazy felicitousness where it ought to be monstrous and terrifying, its reminiscences of Mendelssohn, Tchaikowsky, and "Little Egypt." The lascivious and hieratic dance, the dance of the seven veils, is represented by a *valse lent*. Oftentimes, the score verges perilously on circus-music, recalls the side-shows at county fairs. No doubt, in so doing it weakens the odour exuded by Wilde's play. But if we must have an operatic *Salome*, it is but reasonable to demand that the composer in his

music express the sexual cruelty and frenzy symbolized in the figure of the dancer. And the Salome of Strauss's score is as little the Salome of Wilde as she is the Salome of Flaubert or Beardsley or Moreau or Huysmans. One cannot help feeling her eminently a buxom, opulent Berliner, the wife, say, of the proprietor of a large department store; a heavy lady a good deal less "dämonisch" and "perverse" than she would like to have it appear. But there are moments when one feels as though Strauss's heroine is not even a Berliner, nor of the upper middle class. There are moments when she is plainly Käthi the waitress at the Münchner Hofbrauhaus. And though she declares to Jokanaan that "it is his mouth of which she is enamoured," she delivers the words in her own true-hearted, unaffected brogue.

Nor is Elektra more sharp than Salome, though it oftentimes is the musical equivalent for the massive and violent forms of archaic Greek sculpture that Strauss intended it to be. Elektra herself is perhaps more truly incarnate fury than Salome is incarnate luxury; ugliness and demoniacal brooding, madness and cruelty are here perhaps more sheerly, powerfully expressed than in the earlier score; the scene of recognition between brother and sister is perhaps more large and touching than anything in Salome; Elektra's paeon and dance, for all its closeness to a banal *cantilena*, its *tempo di valse* so characteristic of the later Strauss, is perhaps more grandiosely and savagely triumphant than the dancer's scene with the head. Nevertheless, the work is by no means realized. It is formally impure, a thing that none of the earlier tone-poems are. Neither style nor shape is deeply felt. Both are superficially and externally conceived, and nothing so conclusively demonstrates it than the extreme ineffectuality of the moments of contrast with which Strauss has attempted to relieve the dominant mood of his work. Just as in Salome the more restless and sensual passages, lazily felt as they are, are nevertheless infinitely more significant than the intensely contrasting silly music assigned to the Prophet, so too, in Elektra, the moments when Strauss is cruel, brutal, ugly are of a much higher expressiveness than those in which he has sought to write beautifully. For whereas in moments of the first sort the lions of the Mycenae gates do at times snarl and rage, in those of the second it is the Teutonic beer-mug that makes itself felt. Elektra laments her father in a very pretty and undistinguished melody, and entreats her sister

to slay Klytemnaestra to the accompaniment of a sort of *vals pervers*. It is also in *tempo di valse* that Chrysothemis declares her need of wifehood and motherhood. As an organism, the work does not exist.

But even the expressiveness and considerability of *Salome* and *Elektra*, limited and unsatisfactory as it is, is wanting in the more recent works. With *Der Rosenkavalier*, Strauss seems to have reached a condition in which it is impossible for him to penetrate a subject deeply. No doubt, he always was spotty, even though in his golden days he invariably fixed the inner informing binding rhythm of each of his works. But his last works are not only spotty, but completely spineless as well, invertebrate masses upon which a few jewels, a few fine patches, gleam dully. *Salome* and *Elektra* had at least a certain dignity, a certain bearing. *Der Rosenkavalier*, *Ariadne auf Naxos*, *Joseph's Legende*, and *Eine Alpensymphonie* are makeshift, slack, slovenly despite all technical virtuosity, all orchestral marvels. Every one knows what the score of *Rosenkavalier* should have been, a gay, florid, licentious thing, the very image of the gallant century with its mundane amours and ribbons and cupids, its *petit-mâitres* and furbelows and *billets-doux*, its light emotions and equally light surrenders. But Strauss's music is singularly flat and hollow and dun, joyless and soggy, even though it is dotted with waltzes and contains the delightful introduction to the third act and the brilliant trio. It has all the worst faults of the libretto. Hofmannsthal's "comedy for music," though gross and vulgar and cheap in spirit and unoriginal in design, is full of a sort of clever preciousness, full of piquant details culled from eighteenth century prints and memoirs. The scene of the coiffing is a print of Hogarth's translated to the stage; Rofrano's name, Octavian Maria Ehrenreich Bonaventura Fernand Hyazinth, is like an essay on the culture of the Vienna of Canaletto; the polite jargon of eighteenth century aristocratic Austria, spoken by the characters, with its stiff courteous forms and intermingled French, must have been studied from old journals and gazettes. And Strauss's score is equally precious, equally a thing of erudition and cleverness. Mozart turned the imbecilities of Schickaneder to his uses; Weber triumphed over the ridiculous romancings of Helmine von Chezy. But Strauss follows Hofmannsthal helplessly, soddently. Just as Hofmannsthal imitates Hogarth, so Strauss imitates Mozart, affects his styles, his turns, his spirit;

inserts a syrupy air in the style of Haendel or Mehul in the first act; and follows Mozart with modern comic-opera waltzes, Haendel with post-Wagnerian incantations. And, like Hofmannsthal's libretto, the score remains a superficial and formless thing. The inner and coherent rhythm, the spiritual beat and swing, the great unity and direction, is wanting. "I have always wanted to write an opera like Mozart's, and now I have done it," Strauss is reported to have said after the first performance of *Der Rosenkavalier*. But *Der Rosenkavalier* is almost antipodal to *Don Giovanni* or to *Falstaff* or to *Die Meistersinger* or to any of the great comic operas. For it lacks just the thing the others possess abundantly, a strong lyrical movement, a warm emotion that informs the music bar after bar, scene after scene, act after act, and imparts to the auditor the joy, the vitality, the beauty of which the composers' hearts were full. It is a long while since Strauss has felt anything of the sort.

Had the new time produced no musical art, had no Debussy nor Scriabine, no Stravinsky nor Bloch, put in appearance, one might possibly have found oneself compelled to believe the mournful decadence of Richard Strauss the inevitable development awaiting musical genius in the modern world. There exists a group, international in composition, which, above all other contemporary bodies, arrogates to itself the style of modernity. It is the group, tendrils of which reach into every great capital and centre, into every artistic movement and cause, of the bored ones, the spoilt ones. The present system has lifted into a quasi-aristocratic and leisurely state vast numbers of people without background, without tradition or culture or taste. By reason of its largeness and resources, this group of people without taste, without interest, without finesse, has come to dominate in particular the world of art as the world of play, has come to demand distraction, sensation, excitement which its false existences do not afford it. Indeed, this band has come to give a cast to the whole of present-day life, its members pretend to represent present-day culture. It is with this group, with its drained bodies and frayed sensibilities and tired pulses, that Strauss has become increasingly identified, till of late he has become something like its court-musician, supplying it with stimulants, awaking its curiosities, astonishing and exciting it with the superficial novelty of his works, trying to procure it the experiences it is so lamentably unable to procure itself. It is for it that he created the trumpery horrors, the

sweet erotics, of the score of *Salome*. It is for it that he imitated Mozart saccharinely in *Der Rosenkavalier*, mangled Molière's comedy, committed the vulgarities and hypocrisies of Joseph's *Legende*. And did no evidence roundly to the contrary exist, one might suppose this group really to represent modern life, that its modernity was the only true one, and that in expressing it, in conforming to it, Strauss was functioning in the only manner granted the contemporary composer. But since such evidence exists aplenty, since so many eminent modern musicians have managed to avoid that pestilential band, since a dozen other musicians, to speak only of the practitioners of a single art, have kept themselves immune and yet create beauty about them, to remain on the plane upon which Strauss began life, to persevere in the direction in which he was originally set, and yet live fully, one finds oneself convinced that the deterioration of Strauss which has made him musical purveyor to this group, has not yet been the result of the pressure of outward and hostile circumstances. One finds oneself positively convinced that it was some inner weakness within himself that permitted the spoilt and ugly folk to seduce him from his road, and use him for their own purposes.

And in the end it is as the victim of a psychic deterioration that one is forced to regard this unfortunate man. The thing that one sees happening to so many people about one, the extinction of a flame, the withering of a blossom, the dulling and coarsening of the sensibilities, the decay of the mental energies, seems to have happened to him, too. And since it happens in the lives of so many folk, why should it surprise one to see it happening in the life of an artist, and deflowering genius and ruining musical art? All the hectic unreal activity of the later Strauss, the dissipation of forces, points back to such a cause. He declares himself in every action the type who can no longer gather his energies to the performance of an honest piece of work, who can no longer achieve direct, full, living expression, who can no longer penetrate the centre of a subject, an idea. He is one type of man unfaithful to himself in some fundamental relation, unfaithful to himself throughout his deeds. Many people have thought a love of money the cause of Strauss's decay; that for the sake of gain he has delivered himself bound hand and foot into the power of his publishers, and for the sake of gain turned out bad music. No doubt, the love of money plays an inordinate

role in the man's life, and keeps on playing a greater and greater. But it is probable that Strauss's desire for incessant gain is a sort of perversion, a mania that has gotten control over him because his energies are inwardly prevented from taking their logical course and creating works of art. Luxury-loving as he is, Strauss has probably never needed money sorely. Some money he probably inherited through his mother, the daughter of the Munich beer-brewer Pschörr; his works have always fetched large prices—his publishers have paid him as much as a thousand dollars for a single song; and he has always been able to earn great sums by conducting. No matter how lofty and severe his art might have become, he would always have been able to live as he chose. There is no doubt that he would have earned quite as much money with *Salome* and *Der Rosenkavalier* had they been works of high artistic merit, as he has earned with them in their present condition. The truth is that he has rationalized his unwillingness to go through the labour, the pains of creation, by pretending to himself a constant and great need of money, and permitting himself to dissipate his energies in a hectic disturbed shallow existence, in a tremor of concert-tours, guest-conductorships, money-making enterprises of all sorts, which leave him about two or three of the summer months for composition, and probably rob him of his best energies. So works leave his writing-table half-conceived, half-executed. The score of *Elektra* he permits his publishers to snatch from him before he is quite finished with it. He commences composing *Der Rosenkavalier* before having even seen the third act. The third act arrives; Strauss finds it miserable. But it is too late. The work is half-finished, and Strauss has to go through with it. Composition becomes more and more a mechanical thing, the brilliant orchestration of sloppy undistinguished music, the polishing up of details, the play of superficial cleverness which makes a score like *Der Rosenkavalier*, feeble as it is, interesting to many musicians.

And Richard Strauss, the one living musician who could with greatest ease settle down to uninterrupted composition, gets to his writing-table in his apartment in Charlottenburg every evening at nine o'clock, that is, whenever he is not on duty at the Berlin Opera.

And always the excuses: "Earning money for the support of wife and child is not shameful," or "I am going to accumulate a large enough fortune so that I can give up conducting entirely and spend

all my time composing." But one can be sure that when Strauss soliloquizes, it is a different defence that he makes. One can be sure, then, that he justifies himself cynically, bitterly, grossly, tells himself that the game is not worth the candle, that greatness is a matter of advertisement, that only the values of the commercial world exist, that other success than the procurement of applause and wealth and notoriety constitutes failure. Why should you take the trouble to write good work that will bring you posthumous fame when without trouble you can write work that will bring you fame during your lifetime? The whole world is sham and advertisement and opportunism, is it not? Reputations are made by publishers and newspapers. Greatness is a matter determined by majorities. But impress the public, but write music that will arouse universal comment, but break a few academic formulas and get yourself talked about, but write music that will surprise and seem wonderful at a first hearing, and your fame is assured. The important thing is to live luxuriously and keep your name before the public. In so doing one will have lived life as fully as it can be lived. And after one is dead, what does it all matter?

Yet, though the world be full of men whose spiritual energies have been lamed in kindred fashions, the terrible misadventure of Richard Strauss remains deeply affecting. However far the millions of bright spirits who have died a living death have fallen, their fall has been no farther than his. There is no doubt of the completeness of Strauss's disaster. It is a long while since he has been much beside a bore to his once fervent admirers, an object of hatred to thousands of honest, idealistic musicians. He has completely, in his fifty-sixth year, lost the position of leadership, of eminence, that once he had. Even before the war his operas held the stage only with difficulty. And it is possible that he will outlive his fame. One wonders whether he is not one of the men whose inflated reputations the war has pricked, and that a world will shortly wonder, before his two new operas, how it was possible that it should have been held at all by the man. Had he been the most idealistic, the most uncompromising of musicians, he could not be less respected. Perhaps his last opportunity offered itself in the *Alpensymphonie*. Here was a ceremony that could have made him priest once again. Europe had reached a summit, humanity had had a vision. Before it lay a long descent, a cloudburst, a sunset of a civilization, another

night. Could Strauss have once more girded himself, once more summoned the faith, the energy, the fire that created those first grand pages that won a world to him, he would have been saved. But it was impossible. Something in him was dead for ever. And so, to us, who should have been his champions, his audiences, his work already seems old, part of the past even at its best, unréal except for a few of the fine symphonic works. And to us, who once thought to see in him the man of the new time, he seems only the brave sonorous trumpet-call that heralded a king who never put in his appearance; the glare that in the East lights the sky for an instant and seems to promise a new day, but extinguishes again. He is indeed the false dawn of modern music.

GHITZA

BY KONRAD BERCOVICI

THAT winter had been a very severe one in Roumania. The Danube froze solid a week before Christmas and remained tight for five months. It was as if the blue waters were suddenly turned into steel. From across the river, from the Dobrudja, on sleds pulled by long-horned oxen, the Tartars brought barrels of frozen honey, quarters of killed lambs, poultry and game, and returned heavily laden with bags of flour and rolls of sole leather. The whole day long the crack of whips and the curses of the drivers rent the icy atmosphere. Whatever their destination, the carters were in a hurry to reach human habitation before nightfall—before the dreaded time when packs of wolves came out to prey for food.

In cold, clear nights, when even the wind was frozen still, the lugubrious howling of the wolf permitted no sleep. The indoor people spent the night praying for the lives and souls of the travellers.

All through the winter there was not one morning but some man or animal was found torn or eaten in our neighbourhood. The people of the village at first built fires on the shores to scare the beasts away, but they had to give it up because the thatched roofs of the huts in the village were set on fire in windy nights by flying sparks. The cold cowed the fiercest dogs. The wolves, crazed by hunger, grew more daring from day to day. They showed their heads even in daylight. When Baba Hana, the old gypsy fortune-teller, ran into the schoolhouse one morning and cried, "Wolf, wolf in the yard," the teacher was inclined to attribute her scare to a long drink the night before. But that very night, Stan, the horseshoer, who had returned late from the inn and had evidently not closed the door as he entered the smithy, was eaten up by the beasts. And the smithy stood in the centre of the village! A stone's throw from the inn, and the thatch-roofed school, and the red painted church! He must have put up a hard fight, Stan. Three huge dark brown beasts, as big as cows' yearlings, were found brained. The body of big Stan had disappeared in the stomachs of the rest of the pack. The high leather boots and the hand that still gripped the handle of the sledge-

hammer were the only remains of the man. There was no blood, either. It had been lapped dry. That stirred the village. Not even enough to bury him—and he had been a good Christian! But the priest ordered that the slight remains of Stan be buried, Christian-like. The empty coffin was brought to the church and all the rites were carried out as if the body of Stan were there rather than in the stomachs of wild beasts.

But after Stan's death the weather began to clear as if it had been God's will that such a price be paid for His clemency. The cold diminished daily and in a few days reports were brought from everywhere on the shore that the bridge of ice was giving way. Two weeks before Easter Sunday it was warm enough to give the cows an airing. The air cleared and the rays of the sun warmed man and beast. Traffic on the frozen river had ceased. Suddenly one morning a whip cracked, and from the bushes on the opposite shore of the Danube there appeared following one another six tent wagons, such as used by travelling gypsies, each wagon drawn by four horses harnessed side by side.

The people on our side of the Danube called to warn the travellers that the ice was not thick enough to hold them. In a few minutes the whole village was near the river, yelling and cursing like mad. But after they realized that the intention was to cross the Danube at any cost, the people settled down to watch what was going to happen. In front of the first wagon walked a tall, grey-bearded man trying the solidity of the ice with a heavy stick. Flanking the last wagon, in open lines, walked the male population of the tribe. Behind them came the women and children. No one said a word. The eyes of the whole village were on the travellers, for every one felt that they were tempting Providence. Yet each one knew that Murdo, the chief of the tribe, who was well known to all, in fact to the whole Dobrudja, would not take such risks with his people without good reason.

They had crossed to the middle of the frozen river in steady fashion, when Murdo shouted one word and the feet of every man and beast stopped short. The crossing of the river had been planned to the slightest detail. The people on the shore were excited. The women began to cry and the children to yell. They were driven inland by the men, who remained to watch what was going on. No assistance was possible.

The tall chief of the gypsies walked to the left and chose another path on the ice. The movement continued. Slowly, slowly, in silence the gypsies approached the shore. Again they halted. Murdo was probing the ice with his stick. We could see that the feet of the horses were wrapped in bags, and instead of being shod each hoof was in a cushion made of straw. As Murdo felt his way, a noise at first as of the tearing of paper, but more distinct with every moment, came from somewhere in the distance.

"Whoa, whoa, Murdo, the ice is breaking!" every one began to shout excitedly. The noise grew louder and louder as it approached. One could hear it coming steadily and gauge how much nearer it was. The ice was splitting lengthwise in numberless sheets which broke up in smaller parts and submerged gaily in the water, rising afterwards and climbing one on top of the other, as in a merry embrace.

"Whoa, whoa, Murdo . . ." but there was no time to give warning. With one gesture Murdo had given his orders. The wagons spread as for a frontal attack; the men seized the children and with the women at their heels they ran as fast as their legs could take them. On the shore every one fell to his knees in prayer. The strongest men closed their eyes, too horrified to watch the outcome. The noise of the cracking of the ice increased. A loud report, as of a dozen cannon, and the Danube was a river again—and all, all the gypsies had saved themselves.

It was a gay afternoon, that afternoon, and a gay night also for the whole village. It drank the inn out of everything. The gypsies had a royal welcome. To all questions of why he had dared Providence, Murdo answered, "There was no food for my people and horses. The Tartars have none to sell."

Murdo and his tribe became the guests of the village. His people were all lean. The men hardly carried themselves on their legs. Each one of them had something to nurse. The village doctor amputated toes and fingers; several women had to be treated for gangrene. The children of the tribe were the only ones that had not suffered much. It was Murdo's rule: "Children first, the horses next." The animals were stabled and taken charge of by the peasants. The gypsies went to live in the huts of the people in order to warm themselves back to life. Father liked Murdo, and so the old chief came to live with us. The nights were long. After supper we

all sat in a semicircle around the large fireplace in which a big log of seasoned oak was always burning.

I had received some books from a friend of the family who lived in the capital of the country, Bucharest. Among them was Carlyle's *Heroes and Hero-Worship*, translated into French. I was reading it when Murdo approached the table and said, "What a small Bible my son is reading."

"It is not a Bible, it is a book of stories, Murdo."

"Stories! Well, that's another thing."

He looked over my shoulders into the book. As I turned the page he asked:

"Is everything written in a book? I mean, is it written what the hero said and what she answered and how they said it? Is it written all about him and the villain? I mean are there signs, letters for everything; for laughter, cries, love gestures? Tell me."

I explained as best I could and he marvelled. I had to give an example, so I read a full page from a story-book.

"And is all that written in the book, my son? It is better than I thought possible, but not so good as when one tells a story. . . . It is like cloth woven by a machine, nice and straight, but it is not like the kind our women weave on the loom—but it is good; it is better than I thought possible. What are the stories in the book you are reading? Of love or of sorrow?"

"Of neither, Murdo. Only about all the great heroes that have lived in this world of cowards."

"About every one of them?" he asked again. "That's good. It is good to tell the stories of the heroes."

He returned to the fireplace to light his pipe; then he came to me again.

"If it is written in this book about all the great heroes, then there must also be the record of Ghitza—the great Ghitza, our hero. The greatest that ever lived. See, son, what is there said about him?"

I turned the pages one by one to the end of the book and then reported, "Nothing, Murdo. Not even his name is mentioned."

"Then this book is not a good book. The man who wrote it did not know every hero . . . because not Alexander of Macedon and not even Napoleon was greater than Ghitza. . . ."

I sat near him at the fireplace and watched his wrinkled face while Murdo told me the story of Ghitza as it should be written in

the book of heroes where the first place should be given to the greatest of them all. . . .

About the birth of people, I, Murdo, the chief of the gypsy tribe which was ruled by the forefathers of my great-grandfather (who each ruled close to a hundred years)—about the birth of people, I, Murdo, can say this: That the seed of an oak gives birth to an oak, and that of a pine to a pine. No matter where the seed be carried by the winds, if it is the seed of an oak, an oak will grow; if it is the seed of a pine, a pine. So though it never was known who was the father of Ghitza, we knew him through his son. Ghitza's mother died because she bore him, the son of a white man—she, the daughter of the chief of our tribe. It was Lupu's rule to punish those who bore a child begotten from outside the tribe. But the child was so charming that he was brought up in the tent of one of our people. When Ghitza was ten years old, he worked alongside the men; and there was none better to try a horse before a customer than Ghitza. The oldest and slowest gathered all the strength it had and galloped and ran when it felt the bare boy on its back. Old mares frisked about like yearlings when he approached to mount them.

In his fifteenth summer he was a man, tall, broad, straight and lissom as a locust tree. His face was like rich milk and his eyes as black as the night. When he laughed or sang—and he laughed and sang all the time—his mouth was like a rose in the morning, when the dew-drops hang on its outer petals. And he was strong and good. If it happened that a heavy cart was stuck in the mud of the road and the oxen could not budge it, Ghitza would crawl under the cart, get on all fours, and lift the cart clear of the mud. Never giving time to the driver to thank him, his work done, he walked quickly away, whistling a song through a trembling leaf between his lips. And he was loved by everybody; and the women died just for the looks of him. The whole tribe became younger and happier because of Ghitza. We travelled very much those days. Dobrudja belonged yet to the Turks and was inhabited mostly by Tartars. The villages were far apart and very small, so we could not stay long in any place.

When Ghitza was twenty, our tribe, which was then ruled by my mighty grandfather, Lupu, happened to winter near Cerna Voda, a village on the other side of the Danube. We sold many horses to the

peasants that winter. They had had a fine year. So our people had to be about the inn a good deal. Ghitza, who was one of the best traders, was in the inn the whole day. He knew every one. He knew the major and his wife and the two daughters and chummed with his son. And they all loved Ghitza, because he was so strong, so beautiful, and so wise. They never called him "tzigan" because he was fairer than they were. And there was quite a friendship between him and Maria, the smith's daughter. She was glad to talk to him and to listen to his stories when he came to the smithy. She helped her father in his work. She blew the bellows and prepared the shoes for the anvil. Her hair was as red as the fire and her arms round and strong. She was a sweet maid to speak to, and even the old priest liked to pinch her arm when she kissed his hand.

Then came spring and the first Sunday dance in front of the inn. The innkeeper had brought a special band of musicians. They were seated on a large table between two trees, and all around them the village maidens and the young men, locked arm in arm in one long chain of youth, danced the Hora, turning round and round.

Ghitza had been away to town, trading. When he came to the inn, the dance was already on. He was dressed in his best, wearing his new broad, red silken belt with his snow-white pantaloons and new footgear with silver bells on the ankles and tips. His shirt was as white and thin as air. On it the deftest fingers of our tribe had embroidered figures and flowers. On his head Ghitzza wore a high black cap made of finest Astrakhan fur. And he had on his large ear-rings of white gold. Ghitza watched the dance for a while. Maria's right arm was locked with the arm of the smith's helper, and her left with the powerful arm of the mayor's son. Twice the long chain of dancing youths had gone around, and twice Ghitza had seen her neck and bare arms, and his blood boiled. When she passed him the third time, he jumped in, broke the hold between Maria and the smith's helper, and locked his arm in hers.

Death could not have stopped the dance more suddenly. The musicians stopped playing. The feet stopped dancing. The arms freed themselves and hung limply.

The smith's helper faced Ghitza with his arm uplifted.

"You cursed tzigan! You low-born gypsy! How dare you break into our dance? Our dance!" Other voices said the same.

Everybody expected blows, then knives and blood. But Ghitza

just laughed aloud and they were all calmed. He pinned the smith's helper's arm and laughed. Then he spoke to the people as follows:

"You can see on my face that I am fairer than any of you. I love Maria, but I will not renounce the people I am with. I love them. The smith's helper knows that I could kill him with one blow. But I shall not do it. I could fight a dozen of you together. You know I can. But I shall not do it. Instead I shall outdance all of you. Dance each man and woman of the village until she or he falls tired on the ground. And if I do this I am as you are, and Maria marries me without word of shame from you."

And as he finished speaking he grasped the smith's helper around the waist and called to the musicians:

"Play, play."

For a full hour he danced around and around with the man while the village watched them and called to the white man to hold out. But the smith's helper was no match for Ghitza. He dragged his feet and fell. Ghitza, still fresh and vigorous, grasped another man and called to the musicians to play an even faster dance than before. When that one had fallen exhausted to the ground, Ghitza took on a third and a fourth. Then he began to dance with the maidens. The fiddler's first string broke and the guitar player's fingers were numb. The sun went to rest behind the mountains and the moon rose in the sky to watch over her little children, the stars.

But Ghitza was still dancing. There was no trace of fatigue on his face and no sign of weariness in his steps. The more he danced, the fresher he became. When he had danced half of the village tired, and they were all lying on the ground, drinking wine from earthen urns to refresh themselves, the last string of the fiddle snapped and the musician reeled from his chair. Only the flute and the guitar kept on.

"Play on, play on, you children of sweet angels, and I shall give to each of you a young lamb in the morning," Ghitza urged them. But soon the breath of the flutist gave way. His lips swelled and blood spurted from his nose. The guitar player's fingers were so numb he could no longer move them. Then some of the people beat the rhythm of the dance with their open palms. Ghitza was still dancing on. They broke all the glasses of the inn and all the bottles beating time to his dance.

The night wore away. The cock crew. Early dogs arose and the

sun woke and started to climb from behind the eastern range of mountains. Ghitza laughed aloud as he saw all the dancers lying on the ground. Even Maria was asleep near her mother. He entered the inn and woke the innkeeper, who had fallen asleep behind the counter.

"Whoa, whoa, you old swindler! Wake up! Day is come and I am thirsty."

After a long drink, he went to his tent to play with the dogs, as he did early every morning.

A little later, toward noon, he walked over to the smith's shop, shook hands with Maria's father and kissed the girl on the mouth even as the helper looked on.

"She shall be your wife, son," the smith said. "She will be waiting for you when your tribe comes to winter here. And no man shall ever say my daughter married an unworthy one."

The fame of our tribe spread rapidly. The tale of Ghitza's feat spread among all the villages and our tribe was respected everywhere. People no longer insulted us, and many another of our tribe now danced on Sundays at the inn—yea, our girls and our boys danced with the other people of the villages. Our trade doubled and tripled. We bartered more horses in a month than we had at other times in a year. Ghitza's word was law everywhere. He was so strong his honesty was not doubted. And he was honest. An honest horse-trader! He travelled far and wide. But if Cerna Voda was within a day's distance, Ghitza was sure to be there on Sunday to see Maria.

To brighten such days, wrestling matches were arranged and bets were made as to how long the strongest of them could stay with Ghitza. And every time Ghitza threw the other man. Once in the vise of his two arms, a man went down like a log.

And so it lasted the whole summer. But in whatever village our tribe happened to be, the women were running after the boy. Lupu, the chief of the tribe, warned him; told him that life is like a burning candle and that one must not burn it from both ends at the same time. But Ghitza only laughed and made merry.

"Lupu, old chief, didst thou not once say that I was an oak? Why dost thou speak of candles now?"

And he carried on as before. And ever so good, and ever so merry, and ever such a good trader.

Our tribe returned to Cerna Voda early that fall. We had many horses and we felt that Cerna was the best place for them. Most of them were of the little Tartar kind, so we thought it well for them to winter in the Danube's valley.

Every Sunday, at the inn, there were wrestling matches. Young men, the strongest, came from far-away villages. And they all, each one of them, hit the ground when Ghitza let go his vise.

One Sunday, when the leaves had fallen from the trees and the harvest was in, there came a Tartar horse-trading tribe to Cerna Voda.

And in their midst they had a big, strong man. Lupu, our chief, met their chief at the inn. They talked and drank and praised each their horses and men. Thus it happened that the Tartar chief spoke about his strong man. The peasants crowded nearer to hear the Tartar's story. Then they talked of Ghitza and his strength. The Tartar chief did not believe it.

"I bet three of my best horses that my man can down him," the Tartar chief called.

"I take the bet against a hundred ducats in gold," the innkeeper answered.

"It's a bet," the Tartar said.

"Any more horses to bet?" others called out.

The Tartar paled but he was a proud chief and soon all his horses and all his ducats were pledged in bets to the peasants. That whole day and the rest of the week to Sunday, nothing else was spoken about. The people of our tribe pledged everything they possessed. The women gave even their ear-rings. The Tartars were rich and proud and took every bet that was offered. The match was to be on Sunday afternoon in front of the inn. Ghitza was not in the village at all the whole week. He was in Constantza, on the shores of the Black Sea, finishing some trade. When he arrived home on Sunday morning he found the people of the village, our people, the Tartars, and a hundred carriages that had brought people from the surrounding villages camped in front of the inn. He jumped down from his horse and looked about wondering from where and why so many people at once! The men and the women were in their best clothes and the horses all decorated as for a fair. The people gave him a rousing welcome. Lupu called Ghitza aside and told him why the people had gathered. Ghitza was taken aback but laughed instantly and slapped the chief on the shoulders.

"It will be as you know, and the Tartars shall depart poor and dishonoured, while we will remain the kings of the horse trade in the Dobrudja, honoured and beloved by all."

Oak that he was! Thus he spoke, and he had not even seen the other man, the man he was to wrestle. He only knew he had to maintain the honour of his tribe. At the appointed hour he came to the inn. The whole tribe was about and around. He had stripped to the waist. He was good to look at. On the ground were bundles of rich skins near rolls of cloth that our men and women had bet against the Tartars. Heaps of gold, rings, watches, ear-rings, and ducats were spread on the tables. Tartar horses and oxen of our men and the people of the village were trooped together, the necks tied to one long rope held on one side by one of our men or a villager and at the other end by a Tartar boy. If Ghitza were thrown, one of ours had just to let his end of the rope go and all belonged to the other one. The smithy had pledged all he had, even his daughter, to the winner; and many another daughter, too, was pledged.

Ghitza looked about and saw what was at stake: the wealth and honour of his tribe and the wealth and honour of the village and the surrounding villages.

Then the Tartar came. He was tall and square. His trunk rested on short, stocky legs, and his face was black, ugly, and pock-marked. All shouting ceased. The men formed a wide ring around the two wrestlers. It was so quiet one could hear the slightest noise. Then the mayor spoke to the Tartars and pointed to the Danube; the inn was right on its shore.

"If your man is thrown, this very night you leave our shore, for the other side."

Ghitza kissed Maria and Lupu, the chief. Then the fight began.

A mighty man was Ghitza and powerful were his arms and legs. But it was seen from the very first grip that he had burned the candle at both ends at the same time. He had wasted himself in carouses. The two men closed one another in their vises and each tried to crush the other's ribs. Ghitza broke the Tartar's hold and got a grip on his head and twisted it with all his might. But the neck of the devil was of steel. It did not yield. Maria began to call to her lover:

"Twist his neck, Ghitza. My father has pledged me to him if he wins." And many another girl begged Ghitza to save her from marrying a black devil.

The Tartars, from another side, kept giving advice to their man. Everybody shrieked like mad, and even the dogs howled. From Ghitza's body the sweat flowed as freely as a river. But the Tartar's neck yielded not and his feet were like pillars of steel embedded in rocks.

"Don't let his head go, don't let him go," our people cried, when it was plain that all strength had gone out of his arms. Achmed's pear-shaped head slipped from between his arms as the Tartar wound his legs about Ghitza's body and began to crush him. Ghitza held on with all his strength. His face was blue black. His nose bled, and from his mouth he spat blood. Our people cried and begged him to hold on. The eyes of the Tartars shot fire, their white teeth showed from under their thick lips and they called on Achmed to crush the Giaour. Oh! it seemed that all was lost. All our wealth, the honour and respect Ghitza had won for us; the village's wealth and all. And all the maidens were to be taken away as slaves to the Tartars. One man said aloud so that Ghitza should hear:

"There will not be a pair of oxen in the whole village to plough with; not a horse to harrow with, and our maidens are pledged to the black sons of the devil."

Ghitza was being downed. But, wait . . . what happened! With the last of his strength he broke the hold. A shout rose to rend the skies. Bewildered Achmed lay stupefied and looked on. Tottering on his feet, in three jumps Ghitza was on the high point of the shore—a splash—and there was no more Ghitza. He was swallowed by the Danube. No Tartar had downed him!

And so our people had back their wealth, and the people of the village theirs. No honour was lost and the maidens remained in the village—only Maria did not. She followed her lover even as the people looked on. No one even attempted to stop her. It was her right. Where was she to find one such as he? She, too, was from the seed of an oak.

"And now, son, I ask thee—if the book before thee speaks of all the great heroes, why is it that Ghitza has not been given the place of honour?"

The log was burning in the fireplace, but I said good night to Murdo. I wanted to dream of the mighty Ghitza and his Maria. And ever since I have been dreaming of . . . her.

RENOIR: AN APPRECIATION

BY ALBERT C. BARNES

THE death of Renoir on December the third is so recent that a detached estimate of his place among the great artists of the past is hardly possible. It may be that even expressions of appreciation from those who believe that they know his work, may savour so much of individual bias that they serve chiefly as evidence of the artist's power to generate love and reverence. If, however, there be stated the criteria by which Renoir is judged, the question of mere liking may sink into its deservedly unimportant place. Let us assume the validity of the orthodox statement that all art is automatic, a spontaneous expression of feeling which the artist can neither summon by effort of will nor repress with impunity to his own well-being. If the creative impulse leaves its mark in a material that generates similar feelings in other people, the work of art is a human document of permanent worth. Its degree of worth is determined by the extent to which the artist has enriched, improved, humanized, the common experience of man in the world in which he lives. The manner in which the enrichment occurs is largely by recalling memories and feelings originally associated with perceptions sometimes so nearly forgotten as to have left only the cumulative residue, the "hushed reverberations," which we know as "forms"; and these "forms" necessarily constitute the totals and essence of experience, education and culture. For that reason, art is practical, never exotic, in that it deals with ideas that have served some purpose in human life.

If these axioms of the psychology of aesthetics be accepted, Renoir takes high rank as an artist, because he dealt with the world as it appears to rational beings, he interpreted it in terms of sense and feeling, and his paintings register an enriched record of what humanity sees and feels. He preached nothing but beauty in the world and the joy of living: life is supreme, irresponsible, full of movement, colour, drama, rhythm, music, poetry, and mystic charm. To live for the moment with Renoir's paintings is to be in a haven free from the ravages of one's own troubled spirit and from the vexations

of a stupid external world. With him one may live vicariously the whole stream of the free spirit not dulled and depressed by the drab monotony of everyday affairs. The other world he takes us into is *this* world enriched by his vision. We see the aesthetic strand in all its fabrics, that runs through all experience, that we ignore in the real world. He shows us that there is an ideal world in which we would thrive in peace did we but see it aright. The residuum of our stay in his world is the conviction of the intrinsic justification of life itself: a moral value the legitimate offspring of an aesthetic one. If the day-dream is short-lived, it is none the less real and vital and is capable of infinite and amplified repetitions; he continues to make good.

Renoir proves that life is fundamentally and chiefly a matter of feeling. He painted everything in life as we live it; he was pre-occupied with the homely, everyday things, and he made them momentous, as they really are. Every subject is impregnated with its own essential and delightful feeling; his flowers are voluptuous, his fruit glows as in nature, his people at work or play are intent, his nudes are suffused with a high beauty which bars even the suggestion of sensuality. By his magic he endows every subject with its specific characteristics, vitalizes their associations, gives the feeling of delight that we experience when we know that life is good. No painter ever more successfully converted material reality into what it is in its essence, the expression of the ideal. His perceptions instinctively adjust that proper amount of emotion to each object, which the fine intelligence demands: he is never literal or prosaic and never sentimental. He makes the non-material side of the subject the most momentous part of it.

Renoir's work was the reconstruction of the objects of sense, and that makes it *per se* of universal interest, with an intrinsic aesthetic appeal. There can be no beauty except that objectified and no aesthetic interest that is not based upon a taste for existing things in the real world: mere emotion is the nature in a vacuum which calls for the psychiatrist. Renoir's creative genius reveals itself in the penetrating eye that sees to the core of the structure of things and in the skilled hand that reproduces them so that they reawaken the intellectual content of the perceptions and bring to life their exciting associations which we call feeling. It is because "to poets and philosophers, real things are themselves symbols" that

we lose interest in the merely representative character of Renoir's work and wander with him into the rich garden of experience where imagination and beauty rule over matter. Renoir is a master precisely because he stamped the meanings—truth, rationality, humanity, beauty—upon his works, upon the world, and upon us. Not the least of the charm is the simple, direct way he does it: he never defrauds us of our right to intelligence and to a richer vicarious life by either overwhelming the senses, or by bewildering, or by a mystic, irrational sentimentalism. We feel that the paintings are more important than the things he painted.

By what technical means Renoir wrought his magic is a question of no great moment to the appreciator, of but secondary interest to the connoisseur, and the cause of much literary effort and loose thinking on the part of professional critics. Renoir as a free spirit, responsible only to his vision, intelligence and sincerity, has been the target for the fierce opprobrium of those for whom congealed memories and outworn traditions—the academicians—serve as substitutes for thinking and feeling. These, the "vested interests" of art, argue that Renoir's drawing is wrong, his colour raucous, his composition bad. The artists and connoisseurs in whom ideas function in the place of the debris of the academicians, see in Renoir's drawing accurate expressiveness, in his colour a harmony and a structural value in the creation of forms, and in his composition an exquisite sense of the fitness of things. The amateur with even a moderate acquaintance with Renoir's work is very sure that the drawing, made up as it is of convincing colour, iridescent light, parts of form, and loose indeterminate line, constitutes one of the many rhythmic, musical paths into an altogether delightful poetic realm. He feels that the colour sings harmoniously and richly but never stridently; that the composition is made up of charming sensuous elements dramatically meaningful; that the picture soon ceases to be drawing, colour, composition; that it becomes a repose saturated with the spirit of place, where self is no more, where all is peace and harmony and music and poetry. Awakened from the dream, he goes back to life with a conviction and a memory that Renoir breathes the spirit of perpetual youth in a garden of perennial June loveliness.

SEVEN POEMS

BY MAXWELL BODENHEIM

WHEN FOOLS DISPUTE

A trickle of dawn insinuated itself
Through the crevices of black satiation.
The elderly trees coughed, lightly, hurriedly,
In remonstrance against the invasion.
Lean with a virginal poison
The grass-blades shook, immune to light and time.
A bird lost in a tree
Shrilly flirted with its energy.
One fool, in the garden, spoke to another.

ENDING

A flitting benediction of words
Stood, one by one, upon
The warped threshold of your mouth.

Dreams are wandering realities
Stooping to pick stray roadside flowers
And making silent boutonnières:
Silent drops of mockery.
And since the flowers quickly die,
Dreams must ever walk with closed eyes.

Hearing you, the dream I held
Opened its eyes and perished.

SONNET

Like wine grown stale, the street-lamp's pallor seeks
The wilted anger of her scarlet lips,
And bitter, evanescent finger-tips
Of unsaid questions play upon her cheeks.
She sways a little, and her tired breath,
Fumbling at the crucifix of her mind,
Draws out the aged nails, now dull and kind,
That once were sharp loves hardening in their death.

And so a dumb joy tips her sudden smiles
At passing men who eye her wonderingly
And hurry on because her face is old.
They merely think her clumsy in her wiles:
They know not that her face is dizzily
At rest because old memories have grown cold.

TO J. C.

Master of earnest equilibrium,
You are a Christ made delicate
By centuries of baffled meditation.
You curve an old myth to a peaceful sword,
Like some sleepwalker challenging
The dream that gave him shape.
With gentle, antique insistence
You place your child's hand on the universe
And trace a smile of love within its depths.
And yet, the whirling scarecrow men have made
Of something that eludes their sight
May have the startling simplicity of your smile.

Once every thousand years
Stillness fades into a shape
That men may crucify.

TWO WOMEN ON A STREET

This street is callous apathy
In a scale of greys and browns.
Its black roof-line suggests
Flat bodies unable to rise.
Its air is swarthy rawness
Troubled with ashcans and cellars.
Even its screams are listlessness
Having an evil dream.

An old woman ambles on
With a black bag that seems a part of her back,
And a candidly hawk-like face.
She croons a smothered folk-song
That sifts a flitting roundness
Into her sharply parted face.
Then she surrenders her hand
To the welter of a garbage can.
A hugely wilted woman slinks by
With a cracked stare on her face.
Her eyes are beaten discs
Of the street-lamps' ghastly keenness.
She glides away as though the night
Were a lover flogging her:
Glides into the callous apathy
Of this street, like one who cringes
Happily into her lover's room.

FIFTH AVENUE

Seasons bring nothing to this gulch
Save a harshly intimate anecdote
Scrawled here and there on paint and stone.
The houses shoulder each other
In a forced and passionless communion.
Their harassed angles rise

Like a violent picture-puzzle
Hiding a story that only ruins could reveal;
Their straight lines, robbed of power,
Meet in dwarfed rebellion.
Sometimes they stand like vastly flattened faces
Suffering ants to crawl
In and out of their gaping mouths.
Sometimes, in menial attitudes,
They stand like Gothic platitudes
Slipshodly carved in dark brown stone.

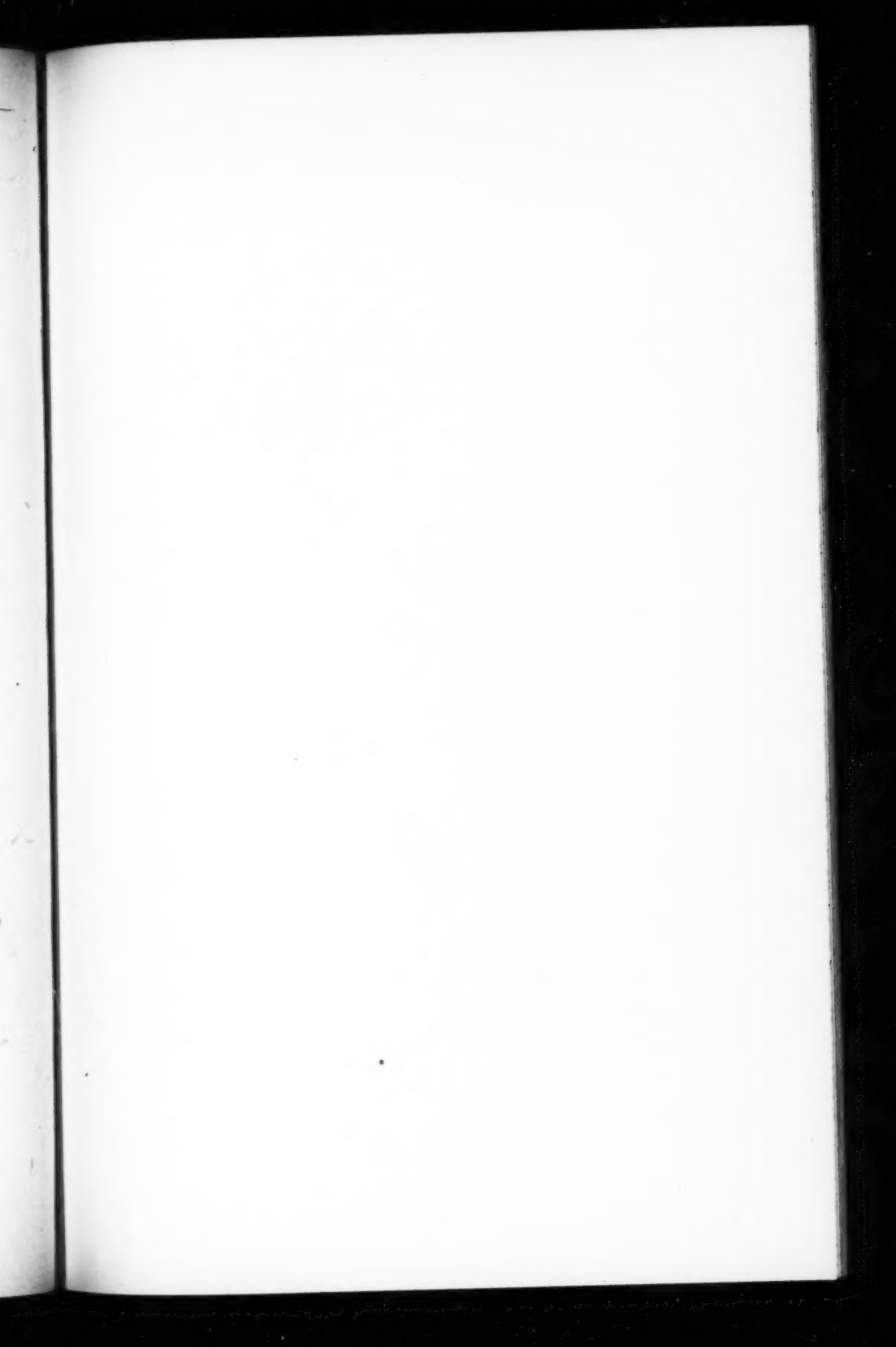
Tarnished solemnities of death
Cast their transfigured hue on this avenue.
The cool and indiscriminate glare
Of sunlight seems to desecrate a tomb,
And the racing people form
A stream of accidental shadows.
Hard noises strike one's face and make
It numb with momentary reality,
But the noiseless undertone returns
And they change to unreal jests
Made by death.

BOARDING-HOUSE EPISODE

Apples race into appetites:
The unswerving mechanism of the table
Hurries through the last dish of supper.
Then, an undulating interlude
From people who have spent one pleasure,
Distractedly juggling its aftermath
And peering at new desires.
One woman gazes at another
While twitching murder shimmers in her eyes
And skims across her face.
Violets in a madman's scene,
Suspended in the air,
Are the eyes of her neighbor.
And in between them sits the nervous man

With face like pouting gargoyle,
Whose brown eyes shout the things he cannot say:
Explosive evasions;
Fears that cannot escape their torn nakedness;
Renunciations groaning from their dungeons.
He eyes each woman, like a man
Solemnly trying to walk on slippery mud.
Crisp inanities ripple back and forth
Among these three, like feverish parrots
Visiting each other's cages.
She with crazy, violet eyes
Plays with her fork, as though its clink
Rhymed with secret, chained thoughts.
Her struggling, urchin's face
Is split by a voiceless ache.
Stealthily she leans against the man's shoulder,
Her movement like the stifled beginning of light.
She with murder in her eyes
And curtly voluminous body,
Plays her child-role evenly.
She seems a demon underneath
Transparent simpering.
Cringing on the rim of middle-age,
With broken shields piled at her feet,
She has made this man a haunted palace
And she stands before the door
She dare not open, with a dagger
For the woman facing her.

They sit, afterwards, upon the boarding-house porch,
Meekly greeting the velvet swagger of evening—
Woman with crazy, violet eyes;
Woman with frightened murder on her face;
And man like a pouting gargoyle.
And then, like tired children,
Their words grow cool and lazy.
They draw nearer to each other
And with a trembling curiosity
Look at each other's hands.





GILBERT CANNAN. BY IVAN OPFFER



GILBERT CANNAN AFTER READING
THE FOLLOWING ARTICLE. BY IVAN OPFFER

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GILBERT CANNAN: INQUISITOR

BY EVELYN SCOTT

RADICALISM is first of all a challenge to the accepted order which it provokes from inertia to justify a hitherto unperturbed existence, but a radical epithet self-applied is also in effect a challenge to him who claims it for title. If a man allow himself to be dubbed a radical, he should be ready to explain as well as to justify his emotional disagreement with the existing order. Mr. Cannan, his friends, and his enemies have alike defied us with assertions which distinguish Mr. Cannan from the complacent mass. Though it be far from the conscious concern of the man himself to recognize inferred alliances, it is very much the business of those artists or critics of life whom the future may entangle in the net of inference to know in what Mr. Cannan's radicalism consists. If his work has in it any persistent element, they will sooner or later be called upon, in self-defence, to champion him or urge on his defeat. In what sense then may he be truly called a revolutionist?

The revolutionist returns, as within etymological limits he must, to something that existed before. If his reversion is to an idea, he goes back across the intervals of time to a thing as calmly permanent as the contemporary ideal which he opposes. The disturbing features which accompany an attempt to assert one conclusion over another give revolutions initiated by the logic of ideas or events a factitious appearance of incalculableness. A purposed progression of incidents presupposes unalterable values, so that in reality this newness which is arrived at by the mathematics of argument can never be anything but a rearrangement of the old. It is true that social revolutions create values by the emotional emphasis of the individuals who participate in them, yet all this is by the way and quite extraneous to the accident which has precipitated the movement, and but for art the unique values of all revolutions would escape in achievement. There is no essential difference in the type of mind which begins a theory of social benefits with the slogan of the republic, and with this text shapes a reasonable defence of its faith, and the mind which operates similarly from a hypothetical point in reality called communism. The interests of these two persons are di-

vided by unaccountable circumstances and it is sad to see the irreconcilability of two natures impelled by their very identity to view each other from opposite poles and without recognition of kinship. It may be said to those who believe that there is something to discover beside the already existing word, that no one who has faith in a formula believes in or desires to create a new value. For such a faith and an attempt to justify it one must turn to the artist in a mood in which he may be distinguished from the propagandist.

The artist turns back with a certain theoretical literality to a point which embraces all points, as permanent as eternity, since he returns to life itself. This is reasonable and theoretically sound; but to the man who is a logician art must be superfluous—at best a bastard and derived thing which would illustrate perfection with geometrically appropriate allegory. Nevertheless, the artist draws his inspiration from a life which evades categories. It is this return to impermanence which makes art a disturbing element, and the purer the artistic feeling which inspires a work, the less it will smack of illusory discoveries contained in theories of rearrangement.

We examine Mr. Cannan's work and at a first glance are inclined to billet him with revolutionists incapable of sensing the new. Again and again he suggests to us that his new is a rearrangement of attitude toward the old. He wants us to believe that art is a speculation about life, a glorious affair of the moving-picture film or the laboratory. Philosophy in a dressing-gown! A modern morality play without the unconscious enhancements of the naive spirit. The tendency of his genius, to use, in a slightly modified sense, a term recently employed by Mr. Waldo Frank, is extroverted. His view of life inclines to be extensive rather than intensive, and as it is impossible to become one with a medium which preserves all of its spatial definitions, there is always an impression of Mr. Cannan's work as far from an immediate revelation of Mr. Cannan as a new theory of the solar system from the spirit of the astronomer who formulated it. You may select from one of Mr. Cannan's novels after another and find that all end on the speculative rather than the inevitable note. The artist in him—and there is an artist in him, as I shall point out later—is time after time subservient to the moralist.

For the reason that the publication of Mr. Cannan's books in the United States has been, chronologically, very erratic, it is impossible

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to follow the sequence in which the volumes were written, but it is fairly certain that *Three Sons and a Mother* was one of the first of his works to be generally read in this country. Here he attempts an epic of Scotch family life among the lower middle classes and tries to reveal its significance in a thousand real and apparent irrelevances. The author overlays the vagueness of some of his characters with the passionateness of his assumption of the book as a whole. This is a novel of manners in that it contemplates life as lived in a certain time and place under certain social customs without attempting to break through the crust into new ways of consciousness. Here is an eye that reveals the surface even as a mirror but enhances its values and makes it seem remotely vivid as some street scene suddenly shown through the window upon a looking-glass in a bedroom. These people have no more spatial reality than the characters in *Wuthering Heights*, but, like Emily Brontë's figures, though in a lesser degree, they are for the most part wraiths of sombre vitality, phantoms congealing impressively in the murky subjective atmosphere which gave them birth. Mr. Cannan is shamelessly perfunctory in his relation of those circumstances which lead us to the particular event which his interest anticipates. There is psychological incident here for a volume twice this length, but much of the vitality of the book is exhausted in the author's impatience to proceed, and he bridges the way from one crisis to another by long paragraphs of bald and uncompromising narration. There is a certain luxurious discrimination in the motives which actuate Mr. Cannan's creatures, and they are rarely impelled by necessity in their solution of the larger problems of life. This conception of man as an agent limited rather by the condition of his environment than by the condition of his soul, smacks of the romantic movement of a past generation with its belief in free will. Indeed it sometimes appears that Mr. Cannan is capable only of romantic emotions and that Jamie, his hero, Byronically cursing his inanition, is an exaggerated prototype of his creator. There is a bogie named Tibby who presides over the fortunes of the household and suffers much in the harsh rule of its mistress. We are led to understand that Tibby loved Jamie but was ruggedly resigned to her bad looks and the impossibility of arousing a reciprocal feeling. The indomitable Margaret Lawrie dies and Jamie, her son, goes off to America, hoping, as Mr. Cannan appears to hope, that God may be found among strange scenes and new faces.

The Stucco House is a sequel, but, terrible as that may sound, it justifies itself. The author's previous familiarity with his characters gives impetus to his re-creation of them; and Tibby, Agnes, Tom, and especially Catherine are here more intensely themselves than in the first book. This Catherine, whose egotism must express itself directly, is a vivid contrast to Margaret Lawrie, in whom personal vanity is submerged in pride of family and race. Margaret Lawrie's ambition is for a reflected glory, while Catherine's desire to impress her world expresses itself without intervention, but the two women are equally ruthless types of the female who, because Nature concedes her nothing, demands every concession of the individuals with whom she is accidentally related. The character of Catherine furnishes a notable example of Cannan the interpreter of the present triumphant over Cannan the apologist for the future. Would that it might be always so, for here is a woman familiar enough for recognition but individualized and inimitable. Catherine develops "sensuality of the soul" which she is able to satisfy within herself. She is hugely and complacently oblivious to the nuances of life except as they touch her interest, and is of course negatively triumphant when she drives her husband to insanity. Jamie's existence wasted in theoretical emotions, however, perverts our sympathies, and the damnable simplicity of his wife's motives is dignified by contrast. Perhaps that is why we are suspicious of the defiance of Jamie's son and ready to believe that Mr. Cannan has introduced us to Bennett for some ulterior propagandist reason, hoping to destroy our satisfaction in the courageous pessimism which would otherwise conclude the book.

It may be said in partial extenuation of Mr. Cannan's speculative tendency that for most of his novels he has chosen the theme which is nearest the life difficulties of the average individual. Time after time he presents the same problem to us in different lights, self-respecting egotism versus the compromises required by sex. There is the childlikeness of the primitive male in Mr. Cannan's plaintive depiction of masculine irresponsibility, and again and again he strays from the irony of the situation (an irony contained in the characters themselves) to a crassly sex-conscious satirization of woman, or, worse yet, he becomes sentimentally reverent of her biological function. Just as he wrote *Three Sons and a Mother* and then rewrote it with a difference in *The Stucco House*, so he created

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Old Mole and revived Old Mole's problems in Young Earnest. In Young Earnest the speculation is so much more intense, and parallel difficulties are faced by characters so much more compelling than those which move through the somewhat lagging pages of the first written book, that Old Mole, except for some incidental intuitive achievement, can safely be ignored. In the nature of a flash of genius but quite casual from the standpoint of the author, is the account of Old Mole's emotion when he hears the girl whom he has married—merely because to marry was easier than not to marry—despised for his sake, and suddenly adores her. The story of this truant professor is told with those confirmed habits of expression which are called style. The language has no richness in it but a mellowed dryness as of old wood, and such details of psychological observation as are contained in the account of the man's awakening toward his wife seem fairly to leap out at us from the monotony of pleasant words. Further on in the same volume we are introduced to the jealousy of the chivalrous husband toward his wife's child by another man, a theme that might have inspired the greatest of realists. With Cannan the reactions of the pair toward each other are not the artistic end but the little considered means for promoting the same progression of rearrangement. The baby dies, and one feels that this was to get rid of the annoyance of a tremendous motif which was sure to assert itself against the superficialities of plot. Mr. Cannan sacrifices life to exploit a theory of those social devices which make life easiest lived. He not only confuses the means with the end but he confuses the means with the beginning. Nowhere does his reality coexist with himself. It is like the preacher's eternity which begins to-morrow. One of the people in Old Mole says, "The universe was not made for man but man for the universe." This is worthy of Thomas Hardy, but the author in question accepts the fact with the Emersonian outlook of a Protestant divine. He is evidently convinced that the body has "brutish" functions which an exalted mind may elevate. As with all dualists, there is a naive sanctimoniousness in his resentment of an urge which the individual cannot qualify, and turning from lust, he discovers that quality of obliviousness most characteristic of lust in a religious experience. That his God is called Humanity in no way alters the type of the emotion, and it prevents him from detaching his art from a conception of nobility. That he may be repelled by the complacency

in disillusion which so often characterizes the modern critic of life is easy to understand. An attitude of disillusion, however, presupposes a necessity in the soul of the scoffer for that very fatuousness of noble aims which he carps at because unfulfilled in the lives of the persons which surround him. True simplicity recognizes values in life as beyond moral comment, and the negative fastidiousness of the sophisticated worldling is as puerile as the blind assertiveness of the self-enwrapped reformer. The latter half of *Old Mole* is a mongrel tract—mongrel because confused by the artistic pretext. It is concerned with a woman as seen through the eyes of two men. She exists as a mirror—herself quite featureless—in which is reflected the double-visaged masculine image. The professor interprets her for us as a priest his deity, but as she never manifests herself in word or act, we cease to believe in her. Mr. Cannan strikes these beings into puppet-like fixity with his synthetic utterance of the times.

Young Earnest is another book which begins with Mr. Cannan at his best and leaves us with Mr. Cannan at his triumphant worst, but the best is so very good that we put down the volume with a gratitude that is stronger than our irritation. This writer has an instinct for tragedy and time after time it leads him through his art to a vital and irreparable accumulation of problems. Presented with the verdict of his own genius, he refuses to recognize it. He cannot believe in problems which have no solution. Leave that for the Frenchman and the Russian. *Young Earnest* introduces us to an admirable creation, René's mother, an old woman solemn as earth, her actions inscrutably emoted from within. She is subject to the law of gravity. One associates with her all the dirtiness of death and birth. She fills space—does not merely film it—and she is isolated of course by the very vividness of her definitions. Against her is set René's father, Mr. Fourmy, a person whose necessities are only less deniable than his wife's. They represent an apotheosis of Mr. Cannan's reiterated challenge to life, and these two people are overpowering enough to make the meandering hopefulness of the spirit in which the book is completed seem childlike and vacuous in its futility. There is such an illusion of comradely sharing in the sensuous joys of love that the inequality of its results is like a betrayal. Every woman would, for a moment at least, reduce the man to her own level of weakness, and it maddens her that no power on earth

can make his responsibilities one with her own. René conjectures as to a rudimentary identity in man and woman with secondarily acquired variations, and he considers woman's obliviousness to delicate shades in experience as compelled by her dedication to a nobler and simpler aim. He cannot feel the horror of a biological argument to justify the self-aware being whose egotism is awake even as his own. René's wife, Linda Brock, and his mistress, Ann Pidduck, are both in unsuccessful revolt, but Ann's rebellion is complete, of the emotions as well as the mind, and there is a kind of dignity in her acceptance of defeat. Linda Brock is a cheat. Without a sincere respect for the established moralities she cannot forgo titles of nobility. She wants the safeguard of matrimony but will give no value received for it. Without suggesting in her that thing beyond analysis which vivifies Mrs. Fourmy, Cannan makes her a character study of arresting intricacy. While reading the book one decides, doubtless without intention on the part of the author, that woman's very triumphs are stolen from her for the good of the race, and if she wishes to assert her individuality it is necessary for her to do something monstrous. Man individualizes himself against Nature's background, but woman's accomplishment is inextricably woven in the tapestry of the race and she can free herself only by stifling the opportunities which emotionally enrich her. Women envy men their irresponsibility in Nature's plan, their fearless enjoyment of the moment, and most tragic complexes in sex relations are subtle attenuations of this often subconscious resentment. Mr. Cannan, while himself refusing to believe it, heightens our conviction that this is true. He destroys our belief in woman's capacity for equality, but, as in all his books, exempts one female expressly to revive our faith during the last few pages. In this case it is Cathleen, a modern adaptation of the mediaeval virgin. René's senses are less deadened than his spirit, but the appeal of the coolly poised and plaintively aloof Cathleen is the usual appeal of immaturity to the jaded taste which hopes to enjoy vicariously some fresh experiences in disillusionment. Of course the book ends happily. Presumably it was because Cathleen and René did not marry that their life was so marvellously uncomplicated. Does Mr. Cannan really fancy that the relationship between Mr. and Mrs. Fourmy, for instance, would have been altered by the technical absence of matrimony?

In two of Mr. Cannan's novels at least, Mendel and Mummery,

there is no easy distinction of Cannan the artist from Cannan the adjuster of difficulties, yet in both books one feels that the defects which would become frank virtues in an inventor or a diplomatist have here in the end insidiously usurped the magnificent humility of the creator and made him puerily self-explanatory. Mummery might be called, with slight injustice, Cannan's interpretation of George Moore. As Moore in Evelyn Innes, the author has hypnotized himself with a clever conception and elucidates it with the vague yet undeterred certainty of the entranced speaker. Evelyn Innes exists as something locked in the author's emotions, without beginning and without end. Cannan, on the other hand, in recounting his artistic project has allowed most of its life to escape him. No single moment of the book is realized entirely, held in the heart an instant as in a chalice of pain. The moments slip away with no attempt on his part to grasp them and no indication that he is aware that they are irrevocably gone. Without effort and without loss of breath he explains to us the types of persons he would depict and the situation in which he has chosen to exhibit their character. His facility in drawing the plan has apparently blinded him to the fact that he never put it into execution. We believe in Charles Mann and Clara Day as people who have existed whom we should like to have known, but no occasion is offered us in which to gratify the curiosity which innuendo has aroused. Clara is a diagram of a charming human creature whose sex enriches her intellectuality without enslaving her through her emotions. Charles Mann and Lord Butcher are delightful variations on the conventional conception of the masculine artist. Sir Henry's shortcomings are depicted with that affectionate tolerance which one feels for the weak man whose vulnerability is potentially at one's disposal. When the world without reacts on a man to reveal him to himself and he does not turn from the fullness of the revelation, we have the great artist in the making. Charles Mann is the voluptuary who regulates the conditions of his acceptance of life. Such men attempt to arrange their experience to produce a series of modulated shocks which they hasten to interpret with pen or brush and ask us to accept the balance of their equation as a summing up of life. Of course there is Rodd, Mr. Cannan's *real* artist, who thinks of humanity as a unity, "an organism subject to the laws of organic life. Talk about persons, nations, groups, and combinations seemed to him irrelevant." If Rodd had gone back to

something that anticipated imposed unities, we might hope the greatest things of him, but we fear that like Mr. Cannan he has betrayed himself. There is the unity of the thing we touch but cannot encompass, whole because it defies analysis, and there is the unity which we conclude after dissection and reorganization of a past occurrence. The latter may, for all that can be said to the contrary, represent a reality. Art does more than this. It cannot in our consciousness be subject to laws, for it continues to be *immediate*. With the entrance of Rodd, the theoretical Cannan returns to the scene and remains to announce his invariable formula of escape in which Rodd and Clara go away together, this time with a legal insurance of the project, and presumably live ever after in peace and understanding. Clara's resignation of personal ambition to fulfil herself in her devotion to her husband is a somewhat mawkishly suggested return to the Margaret Lawrie tradition. One is inclined to close this book with the feeling that it is a great novel which was never written.

Mendel does not evade itself, as might be said of Mummery. The first book (it is in three books) is a substantial and enduring fragment. The style is simple and gracious and the Jews of Gun Street are so surpassingly beautiful within the harmony of their limitations that it is hard to believe that Mr. Cannan has lately antagonized members of the race by his unsympathetic comment. Mendel's mother and father are as fine as a pair of *genre* portraits by one of the Dutch masters, and they are immaculately Jewish, satisfied to enjoy only what they may possess but with absolute integrity of possession in that little. The Jews are the only people who have reconciled the vanity of the individual with the arrogance of the Nature which he represents. Too often the Gentile is merely vain where the Jew is self-respecting, for the Jew's contempt for the thing to which he cannot attain is genuine, whereas this is rarely true of the Gentile. It is the triumph and defeat of the Jews that their self-consciousness is racial rather than individual. The virtue and vice of the fairy tale, the virtue and vice of necessity, the Jew makes beautiful with the exalted *gaucheries* of his religion, but the self-contempt of the Gentile has left him entangled in intricacies of self-righteousness. In spite of the sympathy of the creations in this book, Cannan, as he shows later in *The Anatomy of Society*, shares the Gentile's fallacious superiority toward a financially successful people. He seems

to think that a lie told with half a heart or a trick resorted to with an anaemic will constitutes a demi-virtue. The crime of the Jews (I myself bear them a grudge for it) is that they refuse to waste time arguing with the sun for its hour of setting, and do in the beginning what every one must in the end unless his defiance reach Christ-like proportions. Those who are afraid to die must live, and it would be a very poor god who deviated his course for mere mortal pleading.

Cannan has given us a praiseworthy and almost reverent translation of Romain Rolland's *Jean Christophe*, and Cannan's books seem to bear the occasional imprint of his devotion to the French author. Mendel himself has a more satisfying reality than *Jean Christophe*, who is half the time only a grandiose shadow of the traditional great man of the people, yet the lives of the characters appear to have been conceived under a similar impulse. From being the story of Mendel, the young Jew of unadvantageous beginnings, Cannan's novel digresses to recount the morality masques of Logan, the pseudo-painter, and Oliver, his model, until finally the figure of the Jewish artist which Mr. Cannan has limned so faithfully dissolves in the heat of the author's idealism and we perceive through the shreds of emotional mist a slight inversion of Mr. Cannan's old problem to which he offers again his now well worn solution. Mendel and Morrison, like René and Cathleen, Clara and Rodd, even Ruth and Trevor in that almost fatal volume, *Pink Roses*, decide to begin over. To begin over in the approved Cannanonian style is to shed one's past as a snake his skin in the hope that a new being has matured beneath in virginal ignorance of itself, and waits only for the sloughing off of exhausted imperfections to find its way into self-awareness. Mendel, like René, turns from those individuals too passionate to be moulded either to a present or a future tradition and picks for a mate a creature of embryonic perceptions with every potentiality for acquiring those premeditated virtues which might grace a British matron. However, not even Turgenev could refrain from sentimentality in his regard for an untouched being of the opposite sex. Pity carries with it an inference which decries the capacity to harm him who pities, since it is impossible to feel simultaneously fear and pity for the same object. There is a dramatic quality of condescension in one's attitude toward a creature in whom one senses potentialities of which she herself must be unaware until their fulfilment; and as the man cannot think of her without surmises which

relate her fate to his decision, there is a Sadistic caress in the gentleness of his judgement of her. So in another manner Mr. Cannan fails to escape masculinity in art. There is a little of the child in him, to whom the grandiose is still the beautiful. His dramatic instinct is that of a child. He decorates the subject of realistic treatment with the artistic tinsel of the noble act.

In other respects beside his worship of humanity and his conviction of the humanity of the arts, Mr. Cannan is the victim of his too close understanding of M. Rolland. In the more casual features of technique he imitates the Frenchman's wastefulness of material. His canvases are often prodigally crowded. It may be said of M. Rolland that only his defects permit the intrusion of his virtues, for it is in the vignettes drawn by the way and frequently little related to his central purpose that he has given us the delicate flavour of his insight into isolated lives, and his expression of them is almost lyric. Cannan, on the contrary, would much better leave us with a clear vision of his original purpose. A character is drawn from the over-pregnant depths and presented to us with an incisiveness that makes us disproportionately hopeful that it will develop significance. We feel almost defrauded when it drops back into quiescent obscurity and we are allowed no further acquaintance with it than comes in a bare allusion at the proper place. Visualization is wasted on minor folk and incident, and the large figures on the canvas sometimes remain featureless through a whole volume.

In Mr. Cannan's more frankly discursive and abstract writing, such as *The Anatomy of Society*, *Satire*, *Samuel Butler: A Critical Study*, and *Freedom*, there is a general absence of the swift and unaccountable vision which is the best thing he has to give us. The occasional flare of intuition is gone, and without this to illumine his language his words lack the decisiveness and precision which harmoniously render the austerities of argument and exposition. But if I would speak of him at his worst I should recall a rhymed diatribe against English politics named *Noel*, with the subtitle (*Heaven forefend that it be taken seriously!*) *An Epic*—oh, Puritan Epic fit to have been composed in New England!

It is a relief to turn to his plays—one wishes there were more of them. *James and John* is a dramatic episode in one act. It fails of the title of drama because when the curtain goes up on the two sons and the mother waiting for the return of the prodigal father

who has spent the last twelve years in prison, the irrevocable thing has already occurred and with the old man's actual appearance upon the scene no further crisis is precipitated. The characters of James and John are dryly and harshly indicated. Their mother and father might be preliminary sketches for Mr. and Mrs. Fourny. The sketch (it can scarcely be called more), without profound subtleties, has a massive simplicity about it that commands respect. *Miles Dixon* is in the mood of the folk tale and is a drama in a more literal sense than the play which begins the volume, in spite of the fact that crises are presented with very little suggestion of the accumulation of emotion which makes them inevitable; the construction of the two acts is awkward; and the heroes' tendency to monologues sometimes stretches the modern convention to the breaking-point. It is a thinly veiled allegory and much of its poetry has passed over to the plane of pure intellect, but a residual essence of wistful reality remains. *Mary's Wedding*, besides being authentic drama, is poignant romanticism in realistic dress, the sordid happening in which the motives of action are simplified to give them the true romantic sweep. As an anti-climax there is a mildly amusing skit called *A Short Way for Authors*, and in a separate edition Mr. Cannan has published an ingratiating fancy entitled *Everybody's Husband*. The whimsy of this little play is fragrant with light feeling that might well be the perfume of a deeply rooted flower. As it happens, the glow which Mr. Cannan throws on the demure tragedy of three happy and virtuous women is only topical and illumines nothing which antedates the institution of a Christian marriage.

One does not waste a ream of good paper to damn a man's works. If they deserve damnation, time will do the trick more cheaply. Mr. Cannan is thirty-six years old. He seems yet groping through a fog of personal adventure and has not reached that point at which he can escape from his crystallizing self into full consciousness of his capacities. He has not appraised himself. In him we have a surface petrified in a conventional attitude but glowing with an imprisoned intensity, like a statue that owns a white, hot heart. Its stone eyes are blind, or so closed inward that it sees only itself—not the heart of it, but that self moulded by environment and truly its picture of the world without. Mr. Cannan has seemingly reached a point in his artistic career from which he must either go forward to an acceptance of the innate ironies of life or backward for ever to

confound tragedy with circumstance. He is a man of brilliant beginnings, but unless he can come to a clearer understanding of himself he cannot save his initial creative impulses from exhausting themselves for lack of direction. In *The Anatomy of Society* there is a chapter on definitions. Let Mr. Cannan begin the new chapter of his own endeavour by a definition of his intentions toward art. Volume after volume from his pen has the air of a spiritual experiment. It is as though he asked of his art that it give him something beyond life—a groping for a God outside who will complete what is begun on paper. After the first *immediate* recognition of an experience, one detaches from it cause and effect, which are always exterior to consciousness even if contained, as a sensation or an idea, in the man himself. Thirdly, one abstracts from the experience a quality inclusive of both cause and effect and in this synthesis arrives at the ideal. When one emotionalizes such a synthesis, one becomes romantic. Of the first kind of reaction which reflects life in an utterance clouded with a mist of the senses as though yet warm with the steaming heat of the body, there is little evidence in Mr. Cannan's pages. The modern tendency in art is a fumbling after the source of those things which die as they find the full light of intellectualization. Mr. Cannan discovers himself somewhere midway between the inscrutable impulse which eludes articulation and the formulated expression which is the end of conjectural writing. The intuitive plane is that on which the intelligence is yet actuated by a rudimentary urge, and the wits, sharpened by unrecognized instincts, motivate and direct expression along devious courses. Only intuition could have sensed a psychological situation so involved as (in *Old Mole*) the relation between father and son hinted at in the synopsis of the early life of Cuthbert Jones, alias Timmis. In another place in the same book Cannan says: "He had developed a habit of talking and did not know it. She had taken refuge in silence and was aware of it." This is an almost inspired observation on the complementary reactions of the characters implicated. Or in another story: "Because he made her laugh she distrusted him the more." Again and again such detail is wasted as the story shatters nebulously about Mr. Cannan's dominant conception of humanity as a unit—a monstrous generality.

There is something of the Puritan in the person who demands an intelligible order of his universe, and dresses his art in man-made

garments of perfection in fear of the pain and confusion of her naked beauty. Poor art tortured with yearnings for other spheres! It is perhaps this that makes her return to us in *Pink Roses* in such a sorry plight. With her she brings the same Byronic young man reluctant to renounce the distinction of his grief; the same lady who, ere she pass on, will refresh him with her piquant vulgarity; and the same virgin of cool breeding who offers an ordered way of escape from paths of obscure dalliance. And like Banquo's ghost to the feast comes the persistent Jew. This time for the literary convenience of his creator, he is incarnate in a trinity, José Ysnaga, Sophina Lipinsky, and Mr. Angel. These people are cardboard replicas of the flesh that has gone before. If Mr. Cannan should die now, those who love him would hold a discreet silence about his later work. Fortunately he lives to retrieve himself. Perhaps the spectacle of American art as it is believed in by the American people will arouse in him an antagonism sharp enough to touch those defects in himself which he might almost have owed to this alien race. American art, with a few unpopular exceptions, is notoriously concerned with the purpose of making something other than it is. Art here is a superstructure erected upon the national life for its moral ornament. The difference between Mr. Cannan's attitude and that of many of his contemporaries on this side of the Atlantic is that he retains the unequivocal mental processes of the passionate reformer, while the American writers afflicted with a social conscience are for the most part casual and partial in their reactions in behalf of their faith. Mr. Cannan's feeling for the essential in the human problem makes us sympathize, humanly speaking, with his reluctance to consider it final. It is a passionate vision of incongruities which drives men to the absolute denial that is the assertion of another universe and another order. Of these are the martyrs of religion inviolate in the entireness of their pessimism. Art is indivisible and is as much the assertion of a life that coexists with us as religion is its denial. Mr. Cannan has fairly caught himself between the affirmation of his talent and the instinct which refuses it. May the future, for the glory of art, extricate him from his dilemma! Then one may be able to place him accurately among those who move toward the future of art, or those others who merely gyrate with succeeding revolutions.

NEW CONCEPTS OF TIME AND SPACE

BY CLAUDE BRAGDON

EINSTEIN, the author of the Theory of Relativity, is said to have declared that there were only twelve men in the world capable of understanding it. This may perhaps be true in relation to its purely mathematical aspects, but certain correlative ideas any one should be able to understand, after a fashion, and it is a profitable and delightful exercise of the imagination to follow where they lead.

The chief of these ideas—which is as old as philosophy itself—is that all our knowledge is relative, conditioned by our receptivity—"the perception of a perceiver"—and that by the so-called scientific method we can never know *things-in-themselves*.

The reason for this is plain: we are altogether too conditioned, too "immersed." While endeavouring to discover the changes which take place in the world round about us, we are ourselves affected by those very changes which form the object of our quest. We cannot correctly sense or accurately measure phenomena, because our senses and our measuring instruments are affected in a manner and to an extent it is impossible for us to find out.

For example, if at a given moment of time the universe, our world, and we ourselves should shrink to half their present size, and time (as would be the case) should accelerate correspondingly, we should be quite unconscious of any change, and should regard as a madman any one who tried to tell us what had happened. And this shrinkage could go on repeating itself in geometrical progression until a man became a midge, with a life no longer than an upward-flying spark's; and still, like Hamlet, could he count himself a king of infinite space, and unlike Hamlet, never know that the "times" were out of joint.

If space curves, swells, shrinks; if time lags or hastens, we do not know it, nor the extent of it. These ideas, implicit in the Theory of Relativity, that space and time are not so immutable as they appear, that everything may suffer distortion, that time may run swift or slow without our being in the least aware, can be made interestingly

clear by an illustration first suggested by Helmholtz, of which the following is in the nature of a paraphrase:

If you look at your own image in the shining surface of a teapot or the back of a silver spoon, all things therein appear grotesquely distorted, and all distances strangely exaggerated. But if you choose to make the bizarre supposition that this spoon-world is real, and your image—the spoon-man—a thinking and speaking being, certain interesting facts can be developed by a discussion between you and him.

You say, "Your world is a distorted reproduction of the one in which I live."

"Prove it to me," says the spoon-man.

With a foot-rule you proceed to make measurements to show the rectangularity of the room in which you are standing. Simultaneously he makes measurements yielding the same numerical results; for his foot-rule shrinks and curves in the exact proportion to give the true number of feet when he measures his shrunken and distorted rear wall. No measurement you can apply will prove you in the right, or him in the wrong. Indeed, he is likely to retort upon you that it is your room that is distorted, for he can show that in spite of all its nightmare aspects his world is governed by the same orderly geometry that governs yours.

The above illustration deals only with space relations, for such are easily grasped, but certain distortions in time relations are no less imperceptible and unprovable. So far from having any advantage over the spoon-man, our plight is his. The Principle of Relativity discovers us in the predicament of the Mikado's "prisoner pent," condemned to play with crooked cues and elliptical billiard balls, and of the opium victim, for whom "space swells" and time moves sometimes swift and sometimes slow.

Another question—and perhaps the most important—raised by the Theory of Relativity is in regard to what may be called the *spatiality of time*. In other words, is time the fourth dimension of space?

This idea, startling as it may appear, stands the pragmatic test, that is to say, it "works." Mathematical physicists have found that experimental contradictions disappear, and the mathematical framework of physics is greatly simplified, if, instead of referring phenomena to a set of three space axes (corresponding to the three

dimensions) and one time axis of reference, they are referred to a set of four interchangeable axes involving four homogeneous coordinates, three of space and one of time. Time, in other words, is used by them as though it were a dimension of space—the fourth dimension.

Professor N. A. Oumoff, in his address before the second Mendeleevsky Convention, dealt with this idea in the following clever way:

"The element of time is involved in all spatial measurements. We cannot define the geometrical form of a solid moving in relation to us, we are always defining its *kinematical* form. Therefore our spatial measurements are in reality proceeding not in a three-dimensional manifold, that is, having three dimensions of height, length, and width, but in a four-dimensional manifold. The first three dimensions we can represent by the divisions of a tape-measure upon which are marked feet, yards, or some other measure of length. The fourth dimension we shall represent by a moving-picture film upon which each point corresponds to a new phase of the world's phenomena. The distances between the points of this film are measured by a clock going indifferently with this or that velocity. The transition from one point to another of this film corresponds to our concept of the flow of time. This fourth dimension we therefore call time. The moving-picture film can replace the reel of any tape-measure, or the tape-measure can replace the film. The ingenious mathematician Minkowsky proved that all these four dimensions are equipotent and interchangeable."

If time is space, if it is the measure of a direction at right angles to every direction that we know, why is this so difficult to realize in experience?

It is because we cannot apprehend the higher space-world as we do this one (its three-dimensional section), in its entirety as one takes in a landscape at a glance, but only fragment by fragment, that is, successively. If you look at the landscape through the slit formed by the two hands, moving them circle-wise so that everything is seen piecemeal and successively, and if you utterly absorb yourself, limiting your mind, just as your vision is limited, you get finally the sense that the landscape is *perpetually becoming*; that what has just

been seen ceases thereupon to exist, that what is not seen yet will spring to life all in a moment. In other words, your space-sense, thus reduced or narrowed, takes on those attributes which we are accustomed to associate with time.

This illustrates how the time-sense may be an *imperfect* sense of higher space, the movement of consciousness on a dimension not otherwise known, not otherwise sensed, foreign to experience. What appear to us as phenomena—changes proceeding in the things of our world—may be but the involvement in our space of a dimension of which we are not *spatially aware*. Life, growth, organic being, the transition from simplicity to complexity, the shrinkage and expansion of solids—all these, to this view, are evidences of a four-dimensional extension, because they involve relations which cannot be expressed in terms of length, breadth, and height, but require also *time*.

It will be helpful in understanding how this may be so by dramatizing the predicament of a consciousness limited to the two dimensions of a plane—a flatman—in trying to understand the nature of a solid of our space passing through that plane which constitutes his world. The third dimension of such a solid (the one perpendicular to his plane) would not manifest itself to him as spatial extension, but as temporal change, as a principle of growth, and as a measure of relations incapable of being expressed in terms of length and width merely—the only two dimensions that he knows. All he would be conscious of would be the changing cross-section which the solid traced, defined by the displacement of the constituent matter of his plane. This would seem to him to be matter in a *dynamic* condition. His watch would be his only tape-measure for the third dimension. Imagine, for example, a cone, passed apex downward through the plane. It would appear there first as a point, expanding into a circle, and this still expanding circle would suddenly disappear. These modifications would be caused by the gradual involvement of the third—the vertical—dimension of the cone in the two dimensions of the plane. They would be the *time* expression of the cone's extension in the third dimension, and no other expression would be comprehensible to the flatman. In the same way, the fourth dimension—as spatial extension—is not otherwise comprehensible to us.

These new concepts of space and time bid fair to produce a revo-

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lution in philosophical thought considerably greater than that caused by the displacement of the earth from the center of the universe by Copernicus. Time becomes space, and space becomes a mathematical abstraction! Mathematics in some of its more modern developments requires neither time, space, number, nor quantity. Are we on the point of discovering that the only reality is thought—consciousness?

If so, by a long detour, Western science arrives at the same conclusion as Eastern mysticism: that materiality is only *maya*, illusion—the mirror of consciousness.

In studying phenomena by the objective method we are perhaps in the position of a spectator at a moving-picture show, who, knowing nothing of the mechanism by which the images are produced, tries to unravel the mystery by confining his attention to the screen. What he should do is to turn his back upon the screen, and follow the cone of light until it leads him to the booth, and finally to the film and the lantern. The Theory of Relativity may have the effect of leading us to seek the explanation of phenomena, not in other phenomena of a similar order, for that is a fruitless quest, but to seek it in a higher order of phenomena altogether—in consciousness. For the world-secret dwells not in the world, but in the self.

THREE POEMS

BY FLORENCE TABER HOLT

I

TO PAN

Πάντες δέ θεῶν χατέουσ' ἄνθρωποι.

Sacred to thee,
Wild Spirit of the uplands,
Is the unsown land of these high pastures!
Where the flocks feed in the cool breezes,
And at night
Lie close in ferny hollows
Beneath the circling stars.

II

THE WIND OF LOVE

Ἔρος δαῖτ' ἐτίναξεν ἔμοι φρένας,
ἄνεμος κατ' ὄρος δρύσιν ἐμπέσων.

Like the wind that bows the tree-tops
Is thy presence!
Branches torn, and stripped leaves
Show thy way,
But, where thou hast passed,
The heart of the deep wood
Lies open to the stars.

III

FLOWERS

Not all flowers have souls,
But roses, for they are memories of lovers,
And lilies, their prayers,
Azaleas, who give themselves to the winds,
And irises, beloved of Pindar,
And the pale oenothera,
Incandescent in the twilight,
And many sweet and simple flowers—
Snowdrops and violets,
White and delicately veined—
And all shadowy wind-flowers.
But not tree blossoms,
Which are but the breath of Spring,
Nor poppies, splendid and secret,
And sprung from drops of Persian blood,
Nor water-lilies, who have but their dreams,
And float, little worlds of scent and colour,
Wrapt in their own golden atmosphere.

GASTON LACHAISE

BY E. E. CUMMINGS

TO get rid altogether of contemporary "sculpture" is perhaps the surest way of appreciating the achievement of Lachaise. This coup of unadulterated intelligence has already been given by Mr. W. H. Wright in four sentences which I lift from the masterly sixth chapter of *Modern Painting*—

"After Michelangelo there was no longer any new inspiration for sculpture. After Cézanne there was no longer any excuse for it. He has made us see that painting can present a more solid vision than that of any stone image. Against modern statues we can only bump our heads: in the contemplation of modern painting we can exhaust our intelligences."

I say masterly, because so long as the author keeps one or more eyes on Cézanne it must be admitted by any intelligent person that his analysis is unspeakably correct. Were the entire book devoted to a consideration of Cézanne our own task would be confined to proving that Lachaise does not produce "modern statues." Unfortunately this is not the case. Elsewhere the author remarks that Swinburne brought the rhymed lyric to its highest development. And at one point he mentions that "the aesthetic possibilities of the human form were exhausted by" his old friend Michelangelo, with which it is a trifle difficult to agree. How about the renowned Pablo? Or, to take two far from colossal geniuses: Lembrach, in his lean girl at the Armory Show (1913), and Brancusi, in his *Princesse Bonaparte* at the Independent of is it three years past, did something more than exciting. In the first case a super-El Greco-like significance was pitilessly extorted from the human form, in the second the human form was beautifully seduced into a sensual geometry. In his feeling for his material, moreover, Brancusi showed for some time genuine originality. But he reached an impasse very soon. Judging from the recent bumps and buttons at the De Zayas Gallery he is at present as dead as a doornail.

It must be admitted that Wright is Johnny on the spot when it

comes to Paul Manship—a “sound” man,* of course, but no slave to the Rodin tradition, nor the Saint Gaudens tradition, nor whatever may have produced those fattish girls helplessly seated on either hand as you enter the Boston Public Library. Manship’s statues, including the enlightened Injun at the Metropolitan, remind one a good deal of the remark (which appeared on the back page of *I have forgotten* which French funny paper while *la guerre* was still with us) of one *gonzesse* to another—“J’ai un bon truc chez les boches. Je leur dis que je suis française; ça prend toujours.” Not that Manship tells us that he is *française* (gender aside) but that in his sculpture he is always *chez les américains*, besides having in everything a *bon truc*, a certain cleverness, a something “fakey.” One wonders whether his winning the Prix de Rome accounts for the fact that in the last analysis Manship is neither a sincere alternative to thinking, nor an appeal to the pure intelligence, but a very ingenious titillation of that well-known element, the highly sophisticated unintelligence. At any rate, he was formerly very popular, just as Nadelman (who appeals less subtly to the H. S. U.) is at present supremely popular. Fundamentally Manship is one of those producers of “modern statues” whom Wright’s four sentences wipe off the earth’s face. His work is, of course, superior to the masterpieces of such people as French, Barnard, Bartlett, the Borglums, and Bela Pratt—in so far as something which is thoroughly dead is superior to something which has never been alive.

Wright is, after all, correct in his main thesis. We have bumped our heads altogether too often on “modern statues.” Until recently we gave them a bump every time we passed the celebrated Arc de Triomphe at Twenty-third street. And if we have been caught in the modern sculpture section of the Metropolitan we have received gratis such a massage of bumping as probably could not be duplicated in any one place in America. Let us then turn to Lachaise and exhaust our intelligences for a change, assuming that we can boast thereof.

In the light of contemporary “criticism” this assumption is decidedly daring. Lachaise has, in the past few years, made a large number of artists extremely enthusiastic, and a great many gallery-goers very nervous, not to mention the ladies and gentlemen who may have died of anger. But the official “critics,” perhaps realizing the disastrous consequences to “criticism” of a genuine reaction on

their part to work of overwhelming aesthetic value, have as it were agreed to risk nothing. An exception which proves the rule is Mr. McBride Of The Sun, who on Sunday (February 17, 1918) said, in the course of some hair-raising platitudes, "I like this statue [The Elevation] immensely," generously adding, "If the ribald laugh at it and call it a fat woman they may." In regard to Lachaise's personality The Dealers In Second-Hand Ideas (Strictly guaranteed. Good as new.) are content to quote from the preface which Lachaise wrote for the catalogue of the American sculptors' show (Bourgeois Galleries, Spring of 1919). As to his work, the consensus of "critical" opinion seems to be that it has "dignity" and is the "buoyant" product of a Frenchman who was born, and came to America.

This ducking and side-stepping of Lachaise and his work by the "critics" is more than very amusing. It is extremely valuable as drawing a nice line between his personal achievement and contemporary "sculpture." Like some people who have to have their heads rubbed before they can go to sleep, the "critics" must have theirs bumped before they can go to "criticism." But in Lachaise (as we shall, it is to be hoped un-"critically," see) these gentlemen are up against a man who not only refuses to bump their heads for them but demands a profoundly intelligent expenditure of sensitivity.

"Criticism" or no "criticism," to attempt an analysis of Lachaise's personality strikes us as being almost equally futile and impertinent. And yet, given the important negative obscurity in which the "critics" would plunge that significant and essentially positive part of him, a few however random and obvious remarks on the subject may not be wholly without value. Three things Lachaise, to any one who knows him, is, and is beyond the shadow of a doubt: inherently naïf, fearlessly intelligent, utterly sincere. It is accurate to say that his two greatest hates are the hate of insincerity and the hate of superficiality. That Lachaise is supremely and incorrigibly enthusiastic about his adopted country would appear (in the light of that country's treatment of him) perfectly unreasonable, had it not its reverse side, which is the above mentioned disgust with superficiality and contempt for insincerity—two qualities which he attributes in a high degree to his native land. As his work proves, he has no use for prettiness. This work of his, a crisp and tireless searching for the truths of nature as against the facts of existence, negates Rodin incidentally, as Cézanne's solid strivings incidentally negate

Monet. Temperamentally Lachaise is about as far from the typical Frenchman (more especially from what America likes to believe is the typical Frenchman) as can be imagined; as far, that is, as Cézanne, whose famous hate of contemporary facility and superficiality drove him to a recreation of nature which was at once new and fundamental. Lachaise's perhaps favourite (French) word is *simple*. Applied to his work, it means something quite different from, as in Brancusi, a mere economy of form through the elimination of unessentials; it means form which completely expresses itself, form that perfectly tactilises the beholder, as in the case of an electric machine which, being grasped, will not let the hand let go.

We confess that in the sumptuousness of certain of his perfectly sensuous exquisitely modulated vaselike nudes we have felt something pleasantly akin to what are known as the least imperfect specimens of Chinese art. This brings up an interesting trait of Lachaise's character. He believes that the Orient fascinated him at one time to the point of hypnotism and is resolved that the experience shall not be repeated. Significantly in contrast to Gauguin, he turns his eyes to the north. There is one thing which Lachaise would rather do than anything else, and that is to experience the bignesses and whitenesses and silences of the polar regions. His lively interest in Esquimaux drawings and customs stems from this absolutely inherent desire—to negate the myriad with the single, to annihilate the complicatednesses and prettinesses and trivialities of Southern civilizations with the enormous, the solitary, the fundamental.

Lachaise's work is the absolutely authentic expression of a man very strangely alive.

Every one has read, and no one has heard him boast, that he "studied at the Ecole des Beaux Arts 1898-1903, exhibited at the Salon des Artistes Française 1899, worked with Lalique and Aube 1901," took various prizes, and so forth. What no one knows, outside his immediate friends, with whom he is preternaturally frank, is Lachaise's attitude toward triumphs which would have seduced a mind less curiously and originally sensitive. The fact is that he regards them with something between amusement and disgust. This is not a question of modesty, but of direct and fearless thinking—at which, as has been already stated, Lachaise is a past master. Of the man who in his twenties has captured beyond question every trick of academical technique we ordinarily expect that he will amuse him-

self for a few years at least, if not for the remainder of his life, by the little game which Mr. Huneker has (if we remember correctly) called "exploding firecrackers on the steps of the institute." If he doesn't do this, it means (to use the conventional argument against art schools) that in the realization of academical ideals whatever originality the pupil may have had at the outset has been, if not entirely eliminated, at any rate irrevocably diluted. Lachaise's personality profoundly negates the possibility of self-advertising. As for the instinctive art thesis, his work makes this answer: that the man who by the gods has been fated to express himself will succeed in expressing himself in spite of all schools; that the greatest artist is the man whom no school can kill.

Even if Lachaise could have enjoyed making chumps of his teachers for the pure fun of the thing, it is safe to say that he would never have done so, any more than his genius would ever have made the mistake which Rodin made, of accepting the technique which it had so easily conquered and with that as a basis proceeding to surpass conventional standards, thereby creating another academy. For a Lachaise, as for a Cézanne, academies hold nothing beyond a knowledge of tools. For this reason both men are intrinsically great geniuses. The significance of their production lies in the fact that it goes not beyond but under conventional art.

Frequent allusions having been made to "Lachaise's work," it is high time that we become specific. Last Spring at Penguin Lachaise had on show, in addition to a bust and an alabaster bas-relief, a thing seventeen inches long which he called *The Mountain*. It is not the slightest exaggeration to say that, to any one genuinely either cognizant or ignorant of *Art As She Is Taught*, this thing was a distinct shock. Surrounded by a gurdy sea of interesting chromatic trash it lay, in colossal isolation: a new and sensual island. Merely to contemplate its perfectly knit enormousness was to admit that analysis of, or conscious thinking on our part about, a supreme aesthetic triumph, is a very pitiful substitute for that sensation which is impossibly the equivalent of what the work itself thinks of us. It is difficult to conceive any finer tribute to *The Mountain* than the absence of "criticism" which it created. Bust and bas-relief came in for their customary meagre share, but, so far as can be discovered, *The Mountain* was never once mentioned: which fact may partially, at any rate, excuse the sentences which follow.

Its completely integrated simplicity proclaims The Mountain to be one of those superlative aesthetic victories which are accidents of the complete intelligence, or the intelligence functioning at intuitional velocity. Its absolute sensual logic as perfectly transcends the merely exact arithmetic of the academies as the rhythm which utters its masses negates those static excrements of deliberate unthought which are the delight of certain would-be "primitives." Let us as a specimen of the latter take a painter: say Zorach. In being spectators of his work we are charmed, lulled, by the lure of shapes which imitate and we are tempted to say duplicate the early most simple compositions of mankind. Our intelligence is as it were temporarily numbed into inactivity by the work's "emotional appeal"—but only temporarily, since it is obvious that no art which depends for its recognition upon the casting of a spell on the intelligence can, except in the case of an undeveloped mind, endure beyond a few moments or a few hours at best. The spell wears off, the intelligence rushes in, the work is annihilated. Herein is discovered the secret of that "fakey" feeling with which we are inevitably left by the designs of this unquestionably sincere artist.

In contrast to this self consciously attempted naivete on the part of a twentieth-century adult there is unself conscious expression, that of the child who has not yet inherited the centuries and the savage whose identity with his environment has not yet become a prey to civilization, which—eminent aestheticians to the contrary—is of the utmost significance to aesthetics. The stories by Harlow Atwood in a recent number of *Playboy*, which unfortunately caters habitually to the Zorach audience, are a supreme and exquisite example. Two of Denise's paintings that Lachaise has, which she did before sophistication set in, are another. With Harlow and Denise, A.D. 19—, are the authors respectively of that most amazingly beautiful of all American Indian folk-tales, *The Man Who Married A Bear*, and certain forms and colours out of Africa. All these demand for their complete appreciation that, far from being mere spectators, we allow our intelligences to be digested; and not until this occurs do they cease to excite in us amusement or *mépris*, and reveal their significance. That is to say, they require of us an intelligent process of the highest order, namely the negation on our part, by thinking, of thinking; whereas in an "art" which emulates naivete through intelligent processes the case is entirely different. In the work of

Zorach and his ilk our role is that of spectator, never anything more. But the inexcusable and spontaneous scribblings which children make on sidewalks, walls, anywhere, preferably with coloured chalk, cannot be grasped until we have accomplished the thorough destruction of the world. By this destruction alone we cease to be spectators of a ludicrous and ineffectual striving and, involving ourselves in a new and fundamental kinesis, become protagonists of the child's vision.

To analyze child art in a sentence is to say that houses, trees, smoke, people, etc., are depicted not as nouns but as verbs. The more genuine child art is, the more it is, contrary to the belief of those incapable persons who are content merely to admire it, purely depictive. In denying that the child "represents" and substituting for "representation" some desperately overworked word like "expression," these people are only showing their hostility to the academies, just as when they tell us (which is true) that the bad artist is the representational artist. But, as has been sometimes pointed out, the artist who represents is bad not because he represents: he is bad because he represents something which a camera can represent better. This means that he is depicting something that is second, or rather *n*th, hand, which a child most distinctly is not. Consequently to appreciate child art we are compelled to undress one by one the soggy nouns whose agglomeration constitutes the mechanism of Normality, and finally to liberate the actual crisp organic squirm—the IS.

Academies are when everything included in the abstract and therefore peculiarly soggy noun Nature is accepted superficially or as a noun, and as such declined. In this case "art" is technically nothing but an important prepositional connective—Mr. Sargent's portrait OF Some One, Mr. French's statue OF Something (to take the worst painter and the worst sculptor in America)—between two nouns: an artist and a sitter (if we may make so bold as to say that Grief is it sat for Mr. French). But painting had its Cézanne, whose incredulous and otherwise energetic intelligence resented the doctrine that walking in the wake of some one who is smoking a cigar is vastly superior to smoking the cigar yourself, and by whom the academies, and their important fattish remarks about facts by means of colours, were significantly undermined with minute sculptural shocks of chromatic truth. Insofar as to understand something is, not completely to taste or smell or hear or see or otherwise

to touch it, and to believe something is, not completely to understand it, Cézanne was compelled to mis- or disbelieve and to dis- or misunderstand "Nature"; and he disbelieved and misunderstood it at the age of faith and hope so violently and so carefully as to present us with a significant conjugation of the chromatic verb which is just as inherently intense as, from the plastic standpoint, declensions and nouns are inherently flabby. Precisely in this sense Cézanne became truly naïf—not by superficially contemplating and admiring the art of primitive peoples, but by carefully misbelieving and violently misunderstanding a second-hand world.

To the vocal gesture with preceded grammar Lachaise is completely sensitive. Consequently, in his enormous and exquisite way, Lachaise negates OF with IS. To say that the 1918 exhibition at the Bourgeois Galleries drew from the "critics" more statements of ungentle unintelligence, and from the gallery-going public more expressions of enthusiastic ignorance, than any one-man show of sculpture previously held on the Avenue, is but to do justice to all concerned, including Monsieur Bourgeois. The Elevation, which, as we have already noted, occasioned, in the case of Mr. McBride, the sole unbiased reaction of "criticism" to this exhibition, was responsible for, on the one hand, more unclever exasperation and on the other more fulsome ecstasy than all the rest of the show put together. Lest any should accuse us of hyperbole, we will quote a sample of each "point of view" and let the reader decide for himself whether or no one is more incredibly meaningless than the other.

"It might be a satire on the stout woman who pinches her waist and wears high heels that stand her on her toes for life, or it might be an idealization of her. The answer is in the point of view. Mr. Lachaise is himself not very definite on this score. If it is a satire, it is curious that he should employ the figure as a motif so often. Mr. Lachaise is one of those modernists who hark back to the serenity of Greece and forward to new rhythms which shall be more active.

"She is the mother of men, with the scorn of wisdom and dominance on her brow. She is an unathletic—a queen bee-Amazon, different both from the 'clinging vine' or the pioneer companion that her mothers were. She is the creature toward which creation groaneth. She is man's old 'delicious burden,' buoyed by his reverence like a mist above the ground."

Perhaps it should be stated that one "critic," instead of mentioning *The Elevation* by name, presented the world with a synopsis of what he, she or it is pleased to call "modernism."

"One regrets that an artist so evidently serious in his aims should sacrifice too often to the extraordinary cult of ugliness which seems to have taken the place of beauty on the altars of 'modernism' à outrance. Strength, power, individuality, all of these qualities, must be conceded to Mr. Lachaise, but the tendency to emphasize and glorify the unsightly because it is supposed to represent force and have some deep symbolic meaning, can only lead to the apotheosis of ugliness, a consummation scarcely to be desired, even by the most ardent exponents of modernism."

The reason why all official and unofficial "criticism" OF *The Elevation* fails, and fails so obviously as in the specimens quoted, is this: *The Elevation* is not a noun, not a "modern statue," not a statue OF Something or Some One BY a man named Gaston Lachaise—but a complete tactile self-orchestration, a magnificently conjugating largeness, an IS. *The Elevation* may not be declined; it should not and cannot be seen; it must be heard: heard as a super-Wagnerian poem of flesh, a gracefully colossal music. In mistaking *The Elevation* for a noun the "critics" did something superhumanly asinine. In creating *The Elevation* as a verb Lachaise equalled the dreams of the very great artists of all time.

On the ground that it leads us to a consideration of Lachaise's new show at the Bourgeois Galleries, which event is after all the excuse for this article, we ask the reader's pardon for boring him with a final specimen of "criticism." The author is a distinctly official "critic," Mr. Guy Pène du Bois of the *Evening Post*, of whom it may fairly be said that he succeeds in taking himself more seriously than all the other members of his very defunct profession put together. He is speaking of the exhibition of American sculptures before mentioned.

"Indeed, in the instance of many of these exhibits, when one has said that they are amusing, full credit has been done to their creators. This is entirely true neither in the instance of Lachaise nor of Diederich. It is true that they are of the ultra-fashionables of

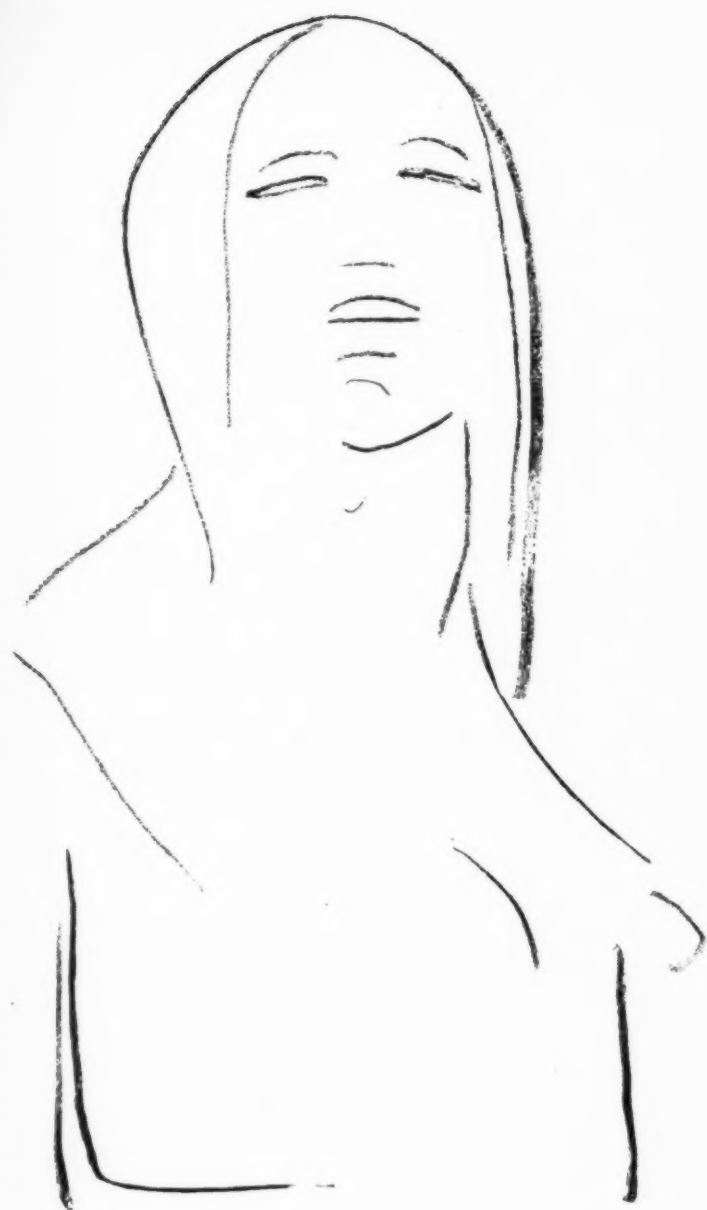
sculpture, but it is also true that they are more than this—that they are exceedingly intelligent men, endowed, moreover, with more than the usual allotment of talent. Just now they reach for a very small and very particular audience, one jaded by experience in art, and demanding certain definite shocks, rare expressions, in order to be aroused. Lachaise's figure of a woman is a real contribution to the so slowly growing gallery of portraits of her."

Unless all signs err, Mr. Guy Pène du Bois is due to get—or should we say has already got, since by the time *THE DIAL* appears the new Bourgeois show will be in full swing—what may without exaggeration be called the surprise of his "critical" life, when he looks over the menu of the latest Lachaise exhibition. For in contrast to the previous show, in which the titles (*Rythme, Anéantissement*, etc.) were chosen by Monsieur Bourgeois, the elements of the present show are, as we trust, to be named by Lachaise himself; in which case the "critic" of the *Evening Post* will find himself confronted by at least two titles which not only knock his "reach for a very small and very particular audience, one jaded by experience in art, and demanding certain definite shocks, rare expressions, in order to be aroused" thesis into a cocked hat, but will, we are confident, give him an attack of goose-flesh into the bargain—*id est*, *Love and Home*. And why? because while any one except Lachaise might stand accused of insincerity in applying these stand-bys of morality to work whose inherent—which is to say ultimate—significance is purely for aesthetics, Lachaise has never stood and never will stand, apropos either his personality or his work, accused of this particular thing. Were it possible so to accuse him, Mr. Guy Pène du Bois would in our opinion be incurring considerable personal danger in so doing. It looks to us as though the gentleman is in the extraordinarily painful, not to say peculiarly undignified, position of being up a tree. At least we may expect of our "critic" that in this predicament he will comfort himself with the last line of that most popular wartime song, *America I Love You*, which goes, "And there're a hundred million others like me."

Unless some unforeseen accident occurs, the present exhibition should include a number of drawings (which totally negate the favourite contention of "criticism," to the effect that Lachaise's work constitutes the doing of one thing over and over), the bas-relief *Dusk*

(already reproduced in the January DIAL), two reclining figures (Home and Portrait), a diving figure, the colossal Love, and last—and to our thinking best—The Mountain. We have already, in all probability, talked too much and said too little (to use a peculiarly conventional phrase) about The Mountain; yet it is without shame that we are guilty of a parting word, for which Lachaise's infrequently paralleled mastery of stone is wholly responsible. In The Mountain as it appears in this exhibition Lachaise has completely enjoyed an opportunity to work directly in the stone Himself as he calls it. He has enjoyed it as his contemporaries to whom stone is not a tactile dream, but a disagreeable everyday tangible nuisance to be handled by paid subordinates, can never enjoy it. In the transformation from the patined plaster (which was at Penguin and later, unofficially, at the Bourgeois Galleries) to the stone now on view, several vastly minute and enormously significant changes have occurred—changes dictated purely by the superior medium. To speak accurately, now for the first time The Mountain actualizes the original conception of its creator; who, in contrast to the contemptible conventionally called "sculptor," thinks in stone whenever and because stone is not, and to whom the distinction between say bronze and alabaster is a distinction not between materials but, on the contrary, between ideas. In The Mountain as it IS Lachaise becomes supremely himself, the master of every aspect of a surface, every flexion of a mass, every trillionth of a phenomenon.

The reader who expects an analysis of the other work which we have mentioned as being included in the exhibition (Dusk, Portrait, Love, etc.) is due for a pleasant disappointment. The very good reasons for our not attempting such an analysis (or rather analyses, since, once again—the whole tribe of Defunctives to the contrary—Lachaise's "point of view" never repeats itself) are briefly: first, we do not feel that we are up to the job; second, if this *essai* means anything whatever it means that the only very great sinners are the Gentleman Dealers In Second-Hand Thoughts. God knows that in the course of the preceding pages we have sinned deeply enough. Rather than despicably to descend into mere praise of an artist who, if only for the reason that we profoundly admire him, does not merit from us a so conventional insult—a man in relation to whose extraordinary achievement praise cannot but constitute a sumptuous impertinence—we prefer to maintain or perhaps to regain silence.

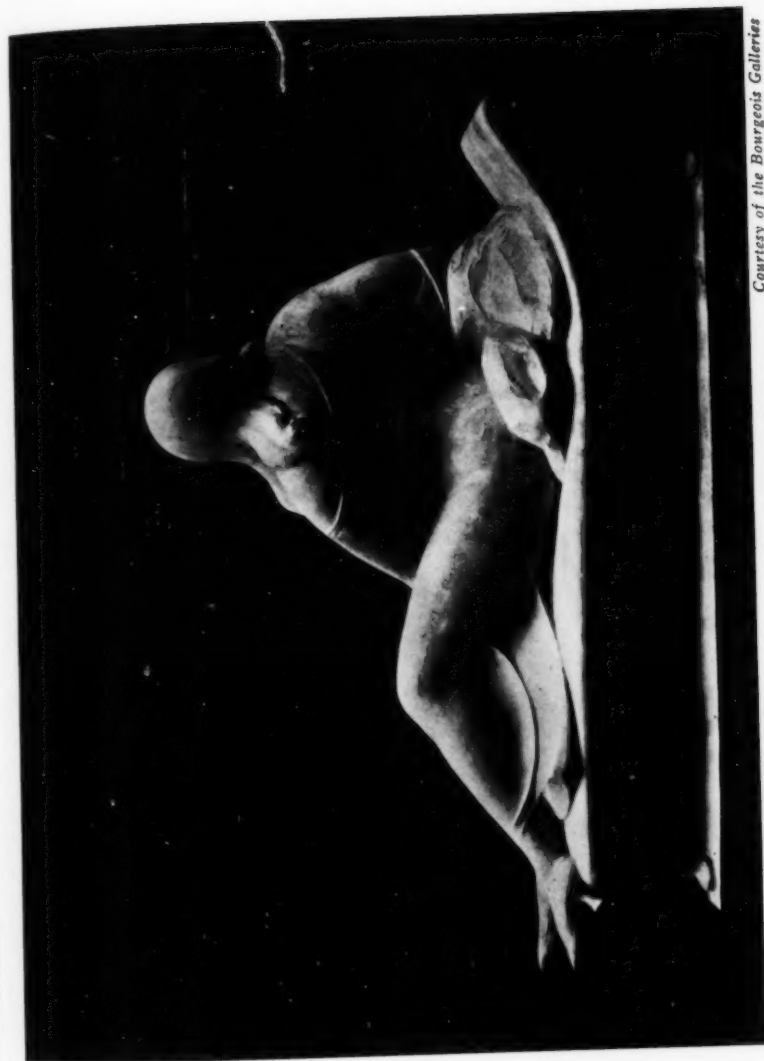


WOMAN'S HEAD. BY
GASTON LACHAISE



A DRAWING. BY
GASTON LACHAISE

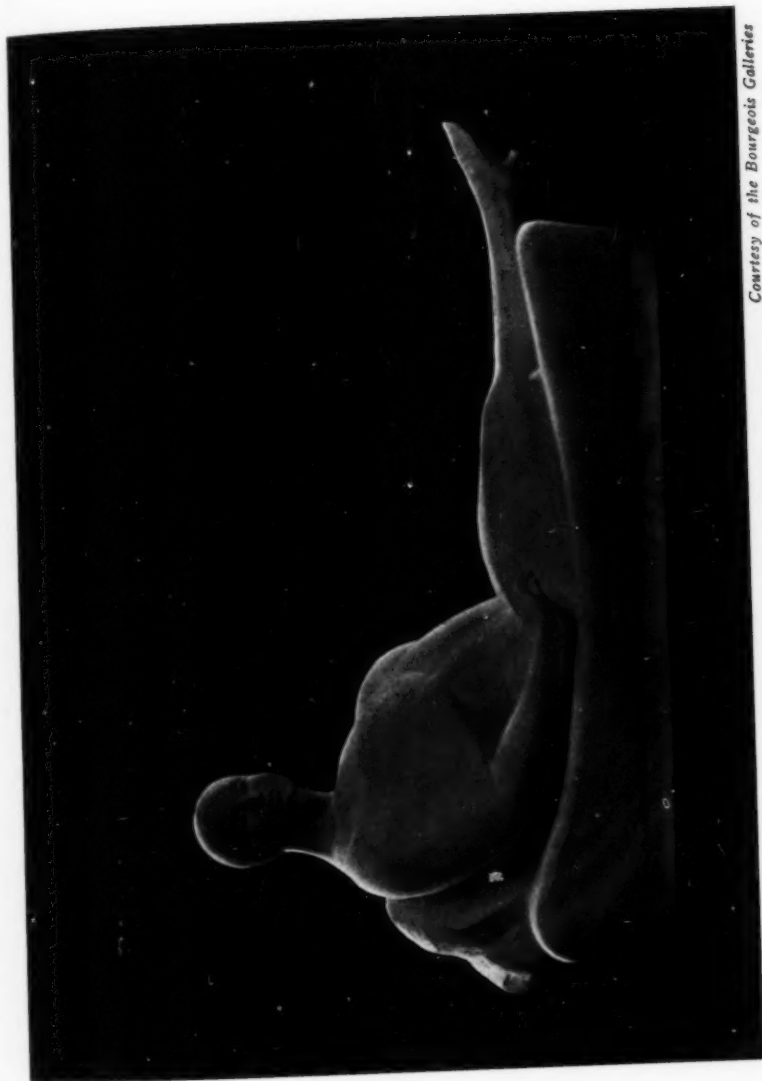




Photograph by Ward

A FIGURE. BY GASTON LACHAISE

Courtesy of the Bourgeois Galleries



Photograph by Ward

A PORTRAIT. BY GASTON LACHAISE

Courtesy of the Bourgeois Galleries

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KIRI NO MEIJIYAMA

A NOH-DRAMA IN JAPANESE SYLLABICS

BY S. FOSTER DAMON

A noble enters, fanning himself, talking as he crosses the path to the stage:

I AM Kiri no MeijiYama, who was travelling to Senako when in a useless storm my boat was lost, buried in wave-flowers. The storm has vanished, the evening is pleasant, and I have sauntered out, accompanied only by my ancestral swords, to savour the delicious melancholy of the autumn moon.

He pauses, and holds his fan in an attitude.

In the field of heaven the clouds bow their heads,
having fallen asleep, cropping the stars.

CHORUS (*waving their fans*):

The sky is freckled with shapeless moons,
but over the earth
rises a luminous mist
that is tangled in the branches.

KIRI: The mist is troublesome. I cannot find the path.

CHORUS: My head is confused with the thick brightness.

Are these ghosts, mingled with the thrill of insect cries?

Are there golden eyes peering?

KIRI: Strange! to see fireflies in the mist!

Over the bridge to the stage have approached an old man, an old woman, and a young girl. They are slightly smaller than one would expect. They move curiously. They now stand motionless, the man and the woman together, the girl behind them. Kiri approaches them as through a mist.

CHORUS: What is this, all surrounded
by fronds of bamboo?
Surely not a hut?

What great fortune for the night!

KIRI: I was not sure, but it seems to be a small hut. The moon—

CHORUS: —silhouettes the bamboo leaves
like shadows on the shoji.

KIRI: But here, where I saw the fireflies, is a little old man. Kind sir, I am lost in the mist, and seek a lodging for the night.

THE OLD MAN (*suddenly moves and bows*): Our miserable hut is unworthy a guest with two swords.

CHORUS: Mist is deepening
 until wave-flowers
 bury the whole world.
 Has winter come already?

KIRI: Surely you can find space.

THE OLD MAN: Old woman! Prepare saki, for we have a guest.

CHORUS: Is it a winter snow-drift
 that breathes on us all?

THE OLD WOMAN (*suddenly moves and bows*): May the guest be welcome! I will prepare.

KIRI: Pray do not trouble yourself.

THE OLD MAN: Pray be pleased to step over our miserable threshold.

CHORUS: The autumn leaves seem
 immovable with terror.
 The mist still thickens.
 Why do I not hear
 the stag belling for his mate?

KIRI: How dark the hut is! I can see nothing. But what is that? Are there fireflies in the hut? No, for they do not move . . . My hand is on my sword.

THE OLD MAN (*holding an imaginary lamp*): Pray please to be lighted.

KIRI: What a beautiful girl!

CHORUS (*softly*): Outside, the trees exhibit
 brocades of yellow and red;
 but within the hut,
 snow drips from cherry blossoms.

KIRI: —unexpected delight! Pray pardon my rudeness. (*He stumbles.*) The sun has blinded me. What is your name?

THE GIRL: Peach-flower is my over-worthy name. Pray be welcome.

She moves away, her face hidden by her fan.

KIRI: Surely her eyes flared at me, like pale gold. Shoki, protect me, if there be need! But she is too lovely.

The little old woman approaches. She skips queerly; but Kiri sees nothing of it, gazing at the girl.

THE OLD WOMAN: Honourable sir, pray to taste of our miserable rice-wine. (*He drinks a small cupful.*)

KIRI: Hot wine is pleasant on an autumn evening.

KIRI (*to the girl*): Is not the science of flowers known to one dwelling here in the midst of nature?

THE GIRL: Autumn flowers are miserable; spring is the time to study flowers.

CHORUS: The mist vanishes.

Warriors of ancient times rein in their horses
to drink the mists of the marsh.

Under the awful silence of the moving moon
the faces of the soldiers are the colour of rain.

KIRI: Should the humming bird
taste not, behold! in three days
the blossoms of the peach-tree
have gone for ever.

THE GIRL: The petals vanish
that under the leaves
fruit may timidly mature.

KIRI: But the humming bird,
awaiting the fruit,
would starve miserably.

THE OLD WOMAN (*approaching*): This final cup of special wine will
make the night warm and full of dreams.

CHORUS (*fluttering their fans*):

—eyes of beaten gold!

KIRI: If the girl drinks, then I also dare drink.

The girl pretends to drink, but empties her cup behind her back.

Kiri hides his wine under the mat.

THE OLD MAN (*singing outside*):

From out the five cups
I have drunk five moons; yet still
but one moon above!

The old man and the old woman retire. The girl arranges her toilet with her hand-mirror.

KIRI: The moon-flower is mute, gazing at itself in the pool; the twin flowers are thrice beautiful.

CHORUS: Eyes winged with delight
 behold not past the threshold
 the needles of the pine-tree
 clear against the moon.
 The night bubbles with faint ghosts;
 but his eyes and words and thoughts
 are entangled in her hair.

THE GIRL (*faintly*): When the flower has fallen
 then are all flowers
 equal in oblivion.

CHORUS: Her folded bosom bears an aureole
 woven of ferns and thin dreams.

THE GIRL: Since I have known you,
 henceforth the moonlight will be
 a cold companion.

CHORUS (*two waving their fans with slow movements, the other
 two holding their fans closed*):

The peach-flower faints with thirst,
 but the moth arrives.
 Pulsing wings glisten with dew.
 Ah! mingled honey and dew!
 The moon has entered the pool.
 Is it the pool that shines? Is it the moon?

SCENE II

KIRI: The saki was strong; I slept against my will. How fair the
 moonlight falls across her body! Ah, moulded bosom! now
 unmoving . . . Her arm is chilled that was my pillow!—
 Peach-flower!—Aah! . . .

CHORUS (*rapidly*): Serpents of ice embrace him!
 Speech is frozen in his throat!
 Who has done this thing?
 Alas! the bride of a night
 lies headless in his embrace.
 Was the old man drunk?
 Alas, the bride of a night
 lies bloodless upon his sleeve.
 Ah! Horror, horror!

KIRI: But I, whose ancestors carried steel fans into battle, I will
avenge this insult. My swords are here, safe beside me.
Where is the old man? Her kiss is not yet cold! Where is
the old woman?

CHORUS: His hungry strides shake the house,
his fists beat through the shoji.
But what does he see?
Horror, horror! the bodies
headless and bloodless
of the old man and woman!

KIRI: If it be robbers—

CHORUS: the flame of my sword
will burn them alive;
one stroke from head to navel!
But hark—!

KIRI: There is surely noise of voices outside the door.

CHORUS: He steals to the door.
O bat in the willow-tree,
stir not more softly!
Is it a leaf that flutters?

The goblins enter, holding out their masks in a row.

KIRI: I see no one. But no! There—

CHORUS: There on the pine branch
stretched across the moon,
three heads in a row,
chattering to each other;
pendant from each one
a bowel-cluster!

KIRI: Horrible! horrible! These are goblins, these are angry
ghosts, that suck the blood of the innocent guest! How fortunate
that I did not drink the last cup of wine. I will go destroy
their bodies, for then they must die.

CHORUS: Eyes of hollow gold gleam against the moon
while he takes the light bodies of the man and woman
down to the bread-stove. What a flight of sparks!
They were consumed instantly, being quite bloodless.
When the morning comes, they think to slip in
their bodies, screw their heads on
nicely, that none can guess it.

and prey again on humans.

Haha, they are lost!

But see, they are flying here.

Silence! Kiri, speed!

for he yet must destroy the body of the young girl.

THE OLD MAN: No, no! Now is the time. My bowels are thirsty
and dry. They must be swollen with good rich blood.

THE OLD WOMAN: You fasten on his neck and I on his belly.

THE GIRL: I beg you, give me but one night more. To-morrow he
will stay, for he is enamoured.

THE OLD MAN: No, no! Now is the time!

THE OLD WOMAN: You fasten on his arm.

THE GIRL: He will stay, he will stay, I tell you!

CHORUS: He stands above her body.

Quick, Kiri, hasten!

He stands above her body,

picks it up, runs through the house;

thrust it in, Kiri,

and destroy the brood!

They are approaching!

They fly in through the window!!

THE THREE: Aie! Aie! Our bodies are moved; the man is gone!

Seek him in the house, seek him in the forest!

KIRI: Beautiful body, even to save your soul, I must destroy you.

But I, Kiri no MeijiYama, I, flourisher of two swords, have I
the strength?

THE THREE: Kill! Kill him! Kill! Aah!!

CHORUS: Quick, quick! They seek you!

Quick, lest golden eyes

strike the strength from your muscles!

At last! It is done! Now their souls may be saved.

But Kiri must flee.

KIRI: Hark! Their cries rouse me from a delicate torpor. I must
seek shelter in the wood, and then gain the nearest town.

The dawn stirs behind the hills,

the very moon is pallid.

Ah, desolation!

CHORUS: What are they weaving
through the tall forest?

Are they bats searching for mates?
No! no! you will not find them.
No, they are lost for ever,
and your souls must now dissolve
like frost on the ferns.
Why must you be so angry
when you are released at last
from this long karma of blood?

Exeunt goblins. Re-enter Kiri.

KIRI: They are deep in the forest now; I will venture out. I follow
the path to the nearest town.

THE GIRL (*re-entering*): Kiri, where is my body?

KIRI: That you cannot know.

THE GIRL: Kiri, where is my body?

CHORUS: What is this sound in the dawn?
Has a withered bunch of grapes
grown a head; and can it speak?
O monstrous! strike it, Kiri!

THE GIRL: Kiri! What have you done with my body? For I shall
die without it . . .

KIRI: I cannot give you your body. The peach-flower's petals are
shrivelled.

THE GIRL: Kiri, last night you loved me.

KIRI: The moon vanished with the coming of day. Leave me,
Peach-flower. Your body is destroyed. Leave me, let me pass.

CHORUS: Ah! What a wail! She sinks down
weeping, on a chestnut bough.

Truly, it is sad.

But see, she flies after him.

THE GIRL: Kiri, last night I loved you; and I even dared my par-
ents' wrath when I tried to save you. You have destroyed me.
Kiri, embrace me.

KIRI: My blood is too precious.

THE GIRL: Kiri, embrace me in your arms. A last time, that I may
have a memory for eternity. . . . Kiri, embrace me!

KIRI: I have a sword.

CHORUS: Fly, fly! you have angered her.
The flower shows yellow teeth,
the forest-fern growls, wolf-like!

Kiri stands motionless, his hand over his face, while she darts her mask over and about him.

But no, Kiri stands firmly.

She darts about him
like an angry bee;
he protects his face
from her fatal lips
with the sleeve of his left arm,
not wishing to use his sword.

What can she desire?

Does she thirst for blood?

Beat her off, Kiri!

And what has she done?

Finding her efforts useless,
in a last rage of despair, in a last thirst of passion,
she has caught his sleeve with desperate teeth,
and hangs exhausted—dead, maybe—who knows?

The girl remains on the stage, entirely hidden in her gauze, the mask being in Kiri's sleeve.

KIRI: I cannot loosen her from my sleeve. What will people think, seeing this? Ah, golden eyes, closed at last! Why did you not remain, my mistress in the moonlight? The night opened a hundred dawns in my eyes, the autumn unfolded a thousand springs in my breast.

Alas! Until now
never have I felt truly
the sadness of things.

A priest enters and addresses him.

The girl, unnoticed, moves to the other side of the stage from the priest.

THE PRIEST: Who are you, young man, that sits weeping by the roadside, holding a girl's head in your sleeve? I fear there has been a misdeed!

KIRI: Sir, this was an angry spirit, that attacked me, and I cannot rid myself of her. I beg you to say a prayer or so over her, that she may rest without suffering.

THE PRIEST: Gladly, gladly, young sir, if your words be true.

CHORUS (*The girl, at first expressing anger and amazement, leaves the stage, with the last words of the chorus, in ecstasy*):

CHORUS: O marvel, at the first sound
of the green beads' click,
the head has dropped from the sleeve!
O wonder, at the first sound
of the priest's chanting,
the deadly passion must melt
frozen in her jaw!
The flesh falls in flakes,
resolves into a small mist
flowing on the moss,
evaporating!

Only an old toothless skull remains on the moss!

THE PRIEST: Your words, sir, were true. But cannot I be of more assistance? For there have been strange tales around here recently of strong men shrivelled in a night; and it seems that you might possess knowledge to open the mystery.

KIRI: There were three that invited me to their hut in last night's mist; and they planned to suck my blood, but I escaped. Here is the spot, but I do not see the hut.

THE PRIEST: There was no mist last night, but a clear moon. There is nothing here but an old tomb fallen in ruins. O marvel! for the inscription says that two centuries ago were buried here a father, mother, and daughter, all executed . . .

CHORUS: The father loved the daughter;
the father loved the mother,
and they became angry ghosts.

THE PRIEST: Let us say prayers for the peaceful progress of their unfortunate souls. For their passions survived their bodies; they were incarnated as shushin. And now, at last, they have escaped by you surely the torments of this monstrous existence.

CHORUS: Let us pray for those bound to the wheel of anguish,
caught in the nets of heaven, earth, and hell.
May Kwannon lead us to the realms of the Bodai!
May Amida gather us to the west!
May our redemption be wholly perfect
when heaven, with its lotus-throned angels,
and earth, with its very trees and mountains,
and the seven hells of the three great sins
be folded and drawn into endless Nibbana.

DREAMS AND FACTS

BY BERTRAND RUSSELL

I

THE influence of our wishes upon our beliefs is a matter of common knowledge and observation, yet the nature of this influence is very generally misconceived. It is customary to suppose that the bulk of our beliefs are derived from some rational ground, and that desire is only an occasional disturbing force. The exact opposite of this would be nearer the truth: the great mass of beliefs by which we are supported in our daily life is merely the bodying forth of desire, corrected here and there, at isolated points, by the rude shock of fact. Man is essentially a dreamer, awakened sometimes for a moment by some peculiarly obtrusive element in the outer world, but lapsing again quickly into the happy somnolence of imagination. Freud has shown how largely our dreams at night are the pictured fulfilment of our wishes; but he might, with an equal measure of truth, have said the same of the day-dreams which we call beliefs.

There are three ways by which this non-rational origin of our convictions can be demonstrated: there is the way of psycho-analysis, which, starting from an understanding of the insane and the hysterical, gradually makes it plain how little, in essence, these victims of malady differ from ordinary healthy people; then there is the way of the sceptical philosopher, showing how feeble is the rational evidence for even our most scientific beliefs, such as that the sun will rise to-morrow; and finally there is the way of common observation of men. It is only the last of these three that I propose to consider.

The lowest savages, as they have become known through the labours of anthropologists, are not found groping in conscious ignorance amid phenomena that they are aware of not understanding. On the contrary, they have innumerable beliefs, so firmly held as to control all their more important actions. They believe that by eating the flesh of an animal or a warrior it is possible to

acquire the virtues possessed by the victim when alive. Many of them believe that to pronounce the name of their chief is such sacrilege as to bring instant death; they even go so far as to alter all words in which his name occurs as one of the syllables; for example, if we had a king named John, we should speak of a jonquil as (say) a George-quil and of a dungeon as a dun-George. When they advance to agriculture, and weather becomes important for the food supply, they believe that magical incantations or the kindling of small fires will cause rain to come or the sun to burn brightly. They believe that when a man is slain his blood, or ghost, pursues the slayer to obtain vengeance, but can be misled by a simple disguise such as painting the face red or putting on mourning. The first half of this belief has obviously originated from those who feared murder, the second from those who had committed it.

Nor are irrational beliefs confined to savages. A great majority of the human race have religious opinions different from our own, and therefore groundless. People interested in politics, with the exception of politicians, have passionate convictions upon innumerable questions which must appear incapable of rational decision to any unprejudiced person. Voluntary workers in a contested election always believe that their side will win, no matter what reason there may be for expecting defeat. There can be no doubt that, in the autumn of 1914, the immense majority of the German nation felt absolutely certain of victory for Germany. In this case, fact has intruded and dispelled the dream. But if, by some means, all non-German historians could be prevented from writing during the next hundred years, the dream would reinstate itself: the early triumphs would be remembered, while the ultimate disaster would be forgotten.

Politeness is the practice of respecting that part of a man's beliefs which is specially concerned with his own merits or those of his group. Every man, wherever he goes, is encompassed by a cloud of comforting convictions, which move with him like flies on a summer day. Some of these convictions are personal to himself: they tell him of his virtues and excellences, the affection of his friends and the respect of his acquaintances, the rosy prospects of his career, and his unflagging energy in spite of delicate health. Next come convictions of the superior excellence of his family:

how his father had that unbending rectitude which is now so rare, and brought up his children with a strictness beyond what is to be found among modern parents; how his sons are carrying all before them in school-games, and his daughter is not the sort of girl to make an imprudent marriage. Then there are beliefs about his class, which, according to his station, is the best socially, or the most intelligent, or the most deserving morally, of the classes in the community—though all are agreed that the first of these merits is more desirable than the second, and the second than the third. Concerning his nation, also, almost every man cherishes comfortable delusions. "Foreign nations, I am sorry to say, do as they do do." So said Mr. Podsnap, giving expression, in these words, to one of the deepest sentiments of the human heart. Finally we come to the theories that exalt mankind in general, either absolutely or in comparison with the "brute creation." Men have souls, though animals have not; man is the "rational animal"; any peculiarly cruel or unnatural action is called "brutal" or "bestial" (although such actions are in fact distinctively human); God made man in his own image, and the welfare of man is the ultimate purpose of the universe.

We have thus a hierarchy of comforting beliefs: those private to the individual, those which he shares with his family, those common to his class or his nation, and finally those that are equally delightful to all mankind. If we desire good relations with a man, we must respect these beliefs; we do not, therefore, speak of a man to his face as we should behind his back. The difference increases as his remoteness from ourselves grows greater. In speaking to a brother, we have no need of conscious politeness as regards his parents. The need of politeness is at its maximum in speaking with foreigners, and is so irksome as to be paralyzing to those who are accustomed only to compatriots. I remember once suggesting to an untravelled American that possibly there were a few small points in which the British Constitution compared favourably with that of the United States. He instantly fell into a towering passion; having never heard such an opinion before, he could not imagine that any one seriously entertained it. We had both failed in politeness, and the result was disaster.

But the results of failure in politeness, however bad from the point of view of a social occasion, are admirable from the point of

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dispelling myths. There are two ways in which our natural beliefs are corrected: one the contact with fact, as when we mistake a poisonous fungus for a mushroom and suffer pain in consequence; the other, when our beliefs conflict, not directly with objective fact, but with the opposite beliefs of other men. One man thinks it lawful to eat pork, but not beef; another, beef but not pork. The usual result of this difference of opinion has been bloodshed; but gradually there is beginning to be a rationalist opinion that perhaps neither is really sinful. Modesty, the correlative of politeness, consists in pretending not to think better of ourselves and our belongings than of the man we are speaking to and his belongings. It is only in China that this art is thoroughly understood. I am told that, if you ask a Chinese mandarin after the health of his wife and children, he will reply: "That contemptible slut and her verminous brood are, as your Magnificence deigns to be informed, in the enjoyment of rude health." But such elaboration demands a dignified and leisurely existence; it is impossible in the swift but important contacts of business or politics. Step by step, relations with other human beings dispel the myths of all but the most successful. Personal conceit is dispelled by brothers, family conceit by schoolfellows, class-conceit by politics, national conceit by defeat in war or commerce. But human conceit remains, and in this region, so far as the effect of social intercourse is concerned, the myth-making faculty has free play. Against this form of delusion, a partial corrective is found in science; but perhaps the corrective can never be more than partial, for it may be that without some credulity science itself would crumble and collapse.

II

Men's personal and group-dreams may be ludicrous, but their collective human dreams, to us who cannot pass outside the circle of humanity, are pathetic. The universe as astronomy reveals it is very vast. How much there may be beyond what our telescopes show, we cannot tell; but what we can know is of unimaginable immensity. In the visible world, the milky way is a tiny fragment; within this fragment, the solar system is an infinitesimal speck, and of this speck our planet is a microscopic dot. On this dot, tiny lumps of impure carbon and water, of complicated structure, with somewhat un-

usual physical and chemical properties, crawl about for a few years, until they are dissolved again into the elements of which they are compounded. They divide their time between labour designed to postpone the moment of dissolution for themselves, and frantic struggles to hasten it for others of their kind. Natural convulsions periodically destroy some thousands or millions of them, and disease prematurely sweeps away many more. These events are considered to be misfortunes; but when men succeed in inflicting similar destruction by their own efforts, they rejoice, and give thanks to God. In the life of the solar system, the period during which the existence of man will have been physically possible is a minute portion of the whole; but there is some reason to hope that even before this period is ended man will have set a term to his own existence by his efforts at mutual annihilation. Such is man's life viewed from the outside.

But such a view of life, we are told, is intolerable, and would destroy the instinctive energy by which men persist. The way of escape that they have found is through religion and philosophy. However alien and indifferent the outer world may seem, we are assured by our comforters that there is harmony beneath the apparent conflict. All the long development from the original nebula is supposed to lead up to man as the culmination of the process. Hamlet is a very well-known play, yet few readers would have any recollection of the part of the First Sailor, which consists of the four words: "God bless you, sir." But suppose a society of men whose sole business in life was to act this part; suppose them isolated from contact with the Hamlets, Horatios, and even Guildensterns; would they not invent systems of literary criticism according to which the four words of the First Sailor were the kernel of the whole drama? Would they not punish with ignominy or exile any one of their number who should suggest that other parts were possibly of equal importance? And the life of mankind takes up a much smaller proportion of the universe than the First Sailor's speech does of Hamlet, but we cannot listen behind the scenes to the rest of the play, and we know very little of its characters or plot.

When we think of mankind, we think primarily of ourself as its representative; we therefore think well of mankind, and consider its preservation important. Mr. Jones, the non-conformist

grocer, is sure that he deserves eternal life, and that a universe which refused it to him would be intolerably bad. But when he thinks of Mr. Robinson, his Anglican competitor, who mixes sand with his sugar and is lax about Sunday, he feels that the universe might well carry charity too far. To complete his happiness, there is need of hell fire for Mr. Robinson; in this way the cosmic importance of man is preserved, but the vital distinction between friends and enemies is not obliterated by a weak universal benevolence. Mr. Robinson holds the same view with the parts inverted, and general happiness results.

In the days before Copernicus there was no need of philosophic subtlety to maintain the anthropocentric view of the world. The heavens visibly revolved about the earth, and on the earth man had dominion over all the beasts of the field. But when the earth lost its central position, man, too, was deposed from his eminence, and it became necessary to invent a metaphysic to correct the "crudities" of science. This task was achieved by those who are called "idealists," who maintain that the world of matter is unreal appearance, while the reality is Mind or Spirit—transcending the mind or spirit of the philosopher as he transcends common men. So far from there being no place like home, these thinkers assure us that every place is like home. In all our best—that is, in all those tastes which we share with the philosopher in question—we are at one with the universe. Hegel assures us that the universe resembles the Prussian State of his day; his English followers consider it more analogous to a bi-cameral plutocratic democracy. The reasons offered for these views are carefully camouflaged so as to conceal even from their authors the connection with human wishes: they are derived, nominally, from such dry sources as logic and the analysis of propositions. But the influence of wishes is shown by the fallacies committed, which all tend in one direction. When a man adds up an account, he is much more likely to make a mistake in his favour than to his detriment; and when a man reasons, he is more apt to incur fallacies which favour his wishes than such as thwart them. And so it comes that, in the study of nominally abstract thinkers, it is their mistakes that give the key to their personality.

Many may contend that, even if the systems men have invented are untrue, they are harmless and comforting, and should be left

undisturbed. But they are in fact not harmless, and the comfort they bring is dearly bought by the preventable misery which they lead men to tolerate. The evils of life spring partly from natural causes, partly from men's hostility to each other. In former times, competition and war were necessary for the securing of food, which could only be obtained by the victors. Now, owing to the mastery of natural forces which science has begun to give, there would be more comfort and happiness for all if all devoted themselves to the conquest of nature rather than of each other. The representation of nature as a friend, and sometimes as even an ally in our struggles with other men, obscures the true position of man in the world, and diverts his energies from the pursuit of scientific power, which is the only fight that can bring long-continued well-being to the human race.

Apart from all utilitarian arguments, the search for a happiness based upon untrue beliefs is neither very noble nor very glorious. There is a stark joy in the unflinching perception of our true place in the world, and a more vivid drama than any that is possible to those who hide behind the enclosing walls of myth. There is the "foam of perilous seas" in the world of thought, which can only be known by those who are willing to face their own physical powerlessness. And above all, there is liberation from the tyranny of fear, which blots out the light of day and keeps men grovelling and cruel. No man is liberated from fear who dare not see his place in the world as it is; no man can achieve the greatness of which he is capable until he has allowed himself to see his own littleness.



A PASTEL. BY CARL SPRINCHORN

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THREE STORIES

BY ROWLAND KENNEY

THE FLAME

THE Gasman was a sixfooter, with a heavy moustache, bushy eyebrows, a thick, black mane, and stubbly beard. He arrived about two in the afternoon—extremely angry, for he had arranged to go to a football match on this particular Saturday, and at the last moment, just as he was about to check off, the Milton Goods Yard Inspector had telephoned to say that Number Four capstan was frozen and must be seen to at once.

The trouble was this: The capstans at Milton were worked by hydraulic pressure, and in wintertime a gas-jet was constantly burning in the pit beneath the capstan to prevent the water in the pipes from freezing and so putting the machinery out of action, and in this case there was a great leakage of gas from one of the joints of the gas-pipe, so the burner could not be fed.

On receiving instructions from the man in charge, the Gasman crossed the Yard, flung down his tool-bag, viciously tugged up the sideplate, jumped into the manhole, and—struck a match . . . !

The next second a great flame stabbed up at the wintry sky, a ragged, blue and yellow sheet, a sinister cloud in the open day. The flame leapt quite twenty feet from the capstan-plate, and in the centre soared the Gasman. He dropped about three yards away, at the foot of a large iron crane. For a few seconds he lay still, a huddled ugly mass. Suddenly his head moved and he sprang to his feet. One wild look he gave, and then ran round and round the crane as fast as he could go. He leaned in towards the crane and circled about it, like a chicken which has been hit on the head with a stick.

Ponto, the capstanman on duty at Number Four, was standing by. For an instant he was too astounded to move, and then—evidently as mad as the Gasman—he tore after him. They chased each other round the crane a score of times before it struck Ponto that, simply by stopping, he would be sure to catch his man. He turned suddenly and the Gasman cannoned into him. In another second they were on the ground, fighting like two bull-terriers.

The Gasman's eyebrows, eyelashes, and moustache were gone; all that remained was crackling stubble. Except for a tuft still standing stiffly up from the crown of his head, his magnificent crop of hair had disappeared. His clothes had undergone a remarkable transformation: the coat was entirely burnt up; the waistcoat was a charred ruin; the trousers were burnt down to two narrow bands a few inches wide round the tops of his boots. The remains of his shirt, a few blackened ribbons, fluttered in the faint breeze. His face was a chequer of red and black—the skin was all burnt, and in places it had entirely fallen away, leaving jagged-edged pieces of red flesh.

In the struggle Ponto got the madman's head "in chancery" and large pieces of burnt skin peeled off on to his sleeve. Then he gripped the Gasman's right hand, which was feeling for a leg-hold. It was a strange shape. Blood and skin caked on Ponto's fingers. Later we saw that the thumb was missing.

The Gasman's red eyes glared savagely; he clawed and fought like a wild cat. Over and over they rolled in silence. It was queer, said Ponto later, to feel those bare legs twining round his and hear the skin crackling under the grip. The fight was finished by Ponto's gripping his adversary's throat with his right hand, and heavily dropping a knee in his stomach.

Ponto's hands and clothes were covered with burnt hair and skin. A sickly smell was in his nostrils. He was faint and sick. It seemed to him that he held his victim an eternity before help came. The Gasman gasped and choked. He struck and kicked convulsively. His mouth was open—the tongue, swollen and parched, hung over the nether lip. Finally the full gang arrived, but waited some time before raising the madman to his feet. For a time he stared wildly, but gradually some measure of sanity returned to him. We helped him across the Yard to the men's dining cabin. He was too dazed to feel the pain, but very soon his features twitched and his fingers clutched at the edge of the table. The madman came over him again. His reddened eyes glowed. He jabbed the thumbless knuckle into his mouth, as a child does, and sucked the stump—licked the blood and moaned like a dog; then made vicious little snaps with his teeth.

We tried to soothe him; for answer he sprang up and whirled his arms about. Two of us crashed at him. Every time we handled

him we drew blood. The smell was awful. Still the madman fought. He did not strike at us, nor we at him; he struggled to get away from his pain, we strove to hold him. It took minutes to master him. When finally we did beat him down, we threw him flat on the table, bent his forearms over the edges and his ankles over the end.

He raved and moaned. He cursed and prayed to us alternately. We now hung on firmly to the bloody wrists and blistered ankles. The ambulance van came as a surprise; we had forgotten that anything existed but ourselves and the thing in our grip. . . .

The last we saw of him was the upstanding tuft of hair on the crown of his head as he lay in the van strapped to the stretcher with his feet to the driver.

TALKIN'

"FLEMIN' 's got the sack," said Slanty Joe.

"What for?" some one asked.

"Talkin'."—

It may seem strange that a man should lose his job as a docker for talking, but to the whole gang Slanty's words were quite explicable. You see, Fleming had been educated on a Hull trawler, so his habits were peculiar and his vocabulary, though limited, weird and arresting. Take his habits first—though one couldn't say that the fishing-ground was entirely responsible for them, they were mostly the gift of nature, and could be borne with some degree of fortitude. Some of them he did not indulge in much; those were the good ones, and they were very few. The others, the ones he cultivated most, we grouped under the general heading of "Fleming's monthly." They were all linked together by indissoluble bonds—thus:

At the beginning of the month he signed the pledge. He was then agonizing through the aftermath of a very great drunk. For a week or so he would assiduously preach temperance and thrift, and, having no money, he would be consistent enough religiously to practise those much over-rated virtues. Then he became dull and low-spirited, and was awkwardly quarrelsome when interfered with. He would continue in this state until the end of the third week, by which time he had accumulated wealth—or what passed for wealth on the Dalby docks—say, two pounds.

Early in the last week of the month he was neither quarrelsome nor preachy; he was just—mellow. He believed in toleration and the Brotherhood of Man. He had views—and aired them—on The Inn as the Workers' Home, and shook hands with his mates about forty times a day, and forgot all old smouldering animosities.

The end of the month often found him in the police court on some charge or other. Once he was "up" for obstruction. Having carried a policeman to the middle of the bridge that spanned the river, he dropped his burden over the parapet, ran round to the bank, swam to the gasping struggler, and tried to haul him to safety in a given number of minutes. One of his prime diversions was juggling with policemen. He didn't believe in Law at all. It hurt him too much.

Afterwards, of course, came repentance and the pledge.

Now this general routine was followed, with occasional lapses when he was in prison, for quite a long time. It went on, as a matter of fact, for as long as Fleming's cousin was foreman, then he got the sack for "talkin'," as Slanty put it.

Some of the words Fleming used no one could understand, but they cut for all that. Most men can stand for a few swear words that are familiar to them, but there is something sinister and ugly in bad language when you don't know what it means.

"They come fro' Hull, an' that explains it," Slanty Joe used to say. Though how that explained it no one quite gathered. According to Slanty, on the fishing-grounds men never refer to the dictionary, because only fifty per cent. of the words they use are to be found in that remarkable book. The other fifty per cent. no one will print, and it was in the use of this second fifty that Fleming excelled.

"'Tisn't as if Oi'd said annythin'—not really to say *annythin'*," said Fleming, when he was telling of the affair later. "Oi just called the crayther a pot-bellied, skew-backed, splay-footed, bandy-legged, squint-eyed son of a cat-fish. Oi said that if Oi'd ever used such stuff as himsilf for bait, all the little fishes in the North Say would ha' been insulted an' would ha' emigrated to Ameriky. Oi just suggested, all kindlyways, that he ought to"— But why go on? I can only give Fleming's mildest and poorest tellings. The cream of his discourse would set this page on fire. . . . So he was sacked and was, in a way, on our hands.

After walking round for some days looking for a job, Fleming became filled with the desire to return to Hull and the rough North Sea. "Oi'll be at home there," he said. "Oi know the place. Oi can undherstand what's what, and the bhoys undherstand me."

The problem was how to get him there. Money there was none, and tramping was too bad for Fleming; out of the question, in fact; there was a foot of snow in the country districts at that time of the year. At last the right idea struck Slanty Joe. Every night a wagon of goods left the docks for Hull. The load generally consisted of large cases or bales with a few oddments crammed in between. So one evening Fleming hoisted himself on the top of the load under the tarpaulin sheet. Slanty had taken the precaution of placing a large bale of woollens at either end, so Fleming had a sort of lair.

Unfortunately, just before the train was made up, a few small

boxes and barrels and hard little objects of various kinds were rushed through and shoved into the cavity where Fleming lay. There was no chance of keeping them back, so the wagon was sheeted up and then knocked down on to the waiting train.

Two days later Slanty Joe came rushing across from the Time-office to the men's cabin. "It's that damned Fleming," he explained, as he banged and bolted the door from the inside. "He's mad!"

Naturally every one suggested that Slanty was the madman. Hadn't Fleming been safely packed away? And then came confirmation of Slanty's tale. It came through the window in the form of a brick. This brick struck the kettle, knocked it over on the fire, and, in the resulting smoke and steam and fluster, Fleming's hands tore down the window sash, and, in another second, Fleming's body launched itself like a torpedo into the huddled mass of men. "Shlanty!" he yelled.

"Where's that murdherin' divil Shlanty? Be the little fishes an' the big waves o' the sivin seas, Oi'll—Oi'll shkin 'im. Be the Cape blast an' the divil's buoy Oi'll—Oi'll have his blood." And so on—only much more so.

No wonder Slanty had rushed, frightened. Fleming was a sight to turn daylight to dark. Lumps and bruises covered his face. One eye was nearly lost to sight. His nose was swollen and all awry. After he had been jumped upon by four or five of the gang and quietened somewhat, it was seen that he limped. And when he was calm enough to tell his story his language was so choice that even the oldest timer in the gang could scarcely understand him.

The story ran something like this: As soon as the train that was to take him to Hull was on the move, Fleming had scattered the small hard objects around and settled down in the midst of them. For a time he was comparatively comfortable. But he, and every one else, had forgotten one important fact. Ten miles from Dalby dock was a junction where all goods trains had to be re-set, and where, consequently, a terrific amount of shunting took place. And Fleming's Hull wagon—he averred—came in for ten times more hitting up than any of the rest.

For the first bang or two Fleming grinned—he would grin in a case like that—but when the shunters warmed up to their work and rattled him about like a die in a box, he got first alarmed and then wildly angry. The small boxes and barrels and things made dead

sets at him. As he warded off the sharp corners of a box on one side, the end of an iron roller jabbed him in the back, whilst a cog-wheel tried to climb up his face by hanging on to his nose. He was punched and poked and jabbed and struck in every conceivable manner by every object that shared his lair, until, despairing and frantic, he signified to the night and the stars that he had had enough. He signified in his usual manner, and the shunters and guards and enginemen listened in awe and so became aware that he had had enough, and that he intended to stand no more of it; but they were in the dark as to who or what or where he was. So he enlightened them.

Pulling out his jack-knife, he slashed madly at his tarpaulin covering. No clean cutting for Fleming. He criss-crossed and curved and twisted until the top of the sheet was a flowing mass of ribbons of insane patterns of all lengths and widths. Then he clambered forth on to one of the bales at the end of the load and informed both the animate and inanimate objects around him what he thought of them and the world.

There were a few houses near, and the inhabitants were partly awakened from sleep by Fleming's talk. They listened for a moment, shuddered, and resumed more pleasant and commonplace dreams. The enginemen were envious when once they had recovered from the first shock. They tried to make mental notes of some of Fleming's most choice expressions, but they soon gave it up in despair. It was impossible to hang on to any of the phrases for above a minute, because one's attention was always distracted by some more weird and effective effort that he was sure to put forth.

Luckily for Fleming one of the shunters knew him, and so the railway police were not bidden to his feast of words. A new sheet was found and rapidly changed for the one he had cut up, and half an hour later the Hull wagon, minus Fleming, was bowling along to its destination. A week later the new foreman softened his heart, and Fleming, chastened in mind and still sore in body, returned to his work as a docker, and made strenuous efforts to cease "talkin'."

PREPARING FOR PASSENGERS

WE were a gang of navvies.

There was Yorky from Wakefield who had just come out of jail after doing ten years for killing his wife. She interfered with him one night when he was trying to fix moonbeams in a whisky bottle which he had just emptied, and he took an axe to her. There was Clinker who had not taken the precaution of killing his first and second wives before he married the third and was consequently always kept on the move, dodging the lot of them. Taffy was the gentleman of the gang. His father was a rich old farmer in some outlandish place with an unpronounceable name—somewhere away up in the mountains above Aberystwith. Taffy had been educated at Bangor College and “spoke correctly.” He took to the road and the shovel after tripping up a policeman who was running him in for laying open another policeman’s skull during a students’ rag. And then there was I.

Clinker was in charge, and we were working at a heading in the Drew Railway Company’s new tunnel under the Lampshire hills.

In tunnelling long distances under the mountains the method is, or perhaps I had better say was, to sink shafts at regular intervals, and from the bottom of these, along the future track, to burrow from one shaft to the other, meeting midway; then when the tunnel was finished and the trains traversed it with their human freightage, the shafts were used as vents to let out the smoke from the engine stacks.

At the bottom of the number three shaft was a widening, a huge cavern as big as a warehouse. From each end of the widening were the tunnels running to the two and four shafts. The end of the *cul-de-sac*—before the two approaching gangs met—was called the “heading,” and we were at the one driving to number four.

From the shaft foot ran a narrow-gauge rail track right up to the heading face, and fitted to this were metal trucks, called skips, about sixty inches long by thirty wide and probably three feet deep.

In the widening were about fifty men—miners, navvies, bricklayers, and labourers—all working at fever heat in the semi-darkness. The place never was really light; each man had a candle which he stuck in a piece of wet clay, or, if he happened to be skip-

running, fixed on the back of the skip, and the only illumination came from these and from the miners' "ducks"—tin vessels like coffee-kettles filled with oil and with a wick stuck down the spout.

Number three shaft was eight hundred feet deep. We had already driven one thousand feet from the shaft and most of the thousand feet had been blown out, for nearly the whole of that infernal hill was solid rock, blue stone as it was called locally, a substance as hard as granite.

Clinker and Yorky fixed the props when necessary and did most of the drilling, while Taffy and I filled and ran the skips and helped with the blasting operations when there was not enough muck to keep us on the run.

Blasting was the devil; we hated it. We were forced to swallow some of the dust which rose in clouds from the screwing, whining drill and, as the day wore on, our breathing became difficult; the overcharged lungs felt as if they must burst our chests. We spat a dark, slimy substance, and we tried to counteract the evil effects of this by nightly swilling ourselves full of bad beer. But as bad as the dust was the compressed air we had to breathe—the best loved and the most hated thing in the tunnel; hated because we infinitely preferred the clear air above, and loved because it was infinitely better than the foul air below. It was pumped down from the surface and conveyed in pipes laid by the side of the skip track. The pipes were of iron, but a length of asbestos was used at the headings, so that they could be twisted and moved as required.

When the holes had been drilled in the rock face and the charges inserted—before the fuse was lit—we had to unscrew this asbestos section, place it and the wooden parts of all tools in a skip and push the skip back down the track, so as to be out of the way of damage from flying pieces of rock. Three or four holes would be charged at once, and as soon as the fuses were touched we raced back into the tunnel and hid behind, or in, the skips, or sometimes lay flat on the wet, rocky tunnel-bed and waited for the explosions, carefully counting the number so as not to go back before the last shot had roared. Sometimes three out of four shots would go off nearly together; then we would wait for the last, seconds would pass, a minute, more minutes—still no sign; we would discuss the advisability of going back, trusting that the fuse had failed, and positively aching for a draught of the sickly sweet air pipes under our feet.

All navvies love drink—if they are real navvies, and not warehousemen or others seeking blisters, thrills, and new swear words; but to our never ceasing astonishment we discovered, when working below, that there was one thing we loved better—fresh air.

When we got back to where the smoke was slowly circling, the struggling ducks fitfully flickered and then gave up the battle in despair, leaving us to grope our way in darkness to the pipe end. After a period of cursing and stumbling over each other, and barking our fingers and shins, we would eventually fix the loose section and throw ourselves down to the vent, taking deep draughts of the horribly sweet stuff and feeling that life was again worth living.

Or again, a short fuse would burn too rapidly and, instead of getting out of the range of the throw of stuff, we would have time to run only a few yards and throw ourselves flat on the ground, or take cover behind some rough projection of rock in the tunnel side before the roar sounded.

We were always in too great a hurry to be frightened on these occasions—though I remember the first time I was caught the muscles of my legs seemed to get out of control, my knees jerked up and down, and my feet knocked on the ground like drumsticks. But, strangely enough, I had no thought of fear, only wonder. My shelter was a small angle of stone like the point of a blacksmith's anvil, it merely sheltered my waist for a few seconds, for the first explosions sent a mass of rock against it and rock and shelter shattered about my beating feet, whilst from the second burst a stone as big as a chair hurtled close to my face—I felt the rush of wind as it passed.

Yorky had to carry me to the air pipe, for I could not for the life of me get my feet to do anything but beat aimlessly up and down.

These premature and delayed explosions were the cause of nearly all the altercations between members of the gang. If Yorky said that only three holes had been fired, and Taffy swore that four had gone, then we considered it up to Taffy to back his words by hustling up with the air pipe. If he were wrong and got knocked over by the late fire of the fourth blast, he swore that Yorky had run five holes instead of four. Anyway there was a row, but a row which seldom lasted long, for Clinker checked it by cursing the disputants into working the edges off their tempers.

One day, however, things came to a head. Yorky and Taffy had

been "barging" all the morning—or, at any rate, Taffy had been snarling at Yorky and Yorky had done a good bit of grunting in return.

We were all stripped to our boots, working like fiends; bad shots and breaking drills had delayed us in our work and driven Clinker into untellable profanity.

Yorky had fired the last hole and the fuse had burned like dry powder. Taffy, who had dropped almost beneath it, got a scrape on the side of the head which took off a patch of scalp as big as a dollar, but which apparently did little damage otherwise—except to rouse his usually vile temper to unbearable heights. He fumed and cursed until he could scarcely see, swearing that Yorky had used a short fuse and, as the Yorkshireman refused to be drawn, Taffy finally threatened to cleave his skull with a pick.

Yorky had so far said nothing, but that fetched him. Swiftly swinging his left, he tapped Taffy's nose. That meant fighting; but it had to be done according to rules, so I laid hands on Taffy from behind and held his throttle, whilst Clinker jerked the bar out of his hands—a short pinch-bar he had grasped as he staggered under Yorky's blow. It took minutes to get sense into him, Clinker kneeling his chest, I fingering his Adam's apple until his eyes bulged like those of a hooked fish, and Yorky explaining that he'd fight till sundown where there was space.

There was marvelling and much joy in the widening when we tailed out of the tunnel and Clinker explained to Big Walt, the "standing ganger," that two of his men must fight.

In number three camp fighting was nearly as common as working, but it was generally done after shifts, and members of our gang had never before been known to fight with each other.

Now it was the inalienable right of the whole gang to play the role of spectators in any fight that occurred, but it would have wasted too much time to take all the men above, so some of them formed a ring in the widening. It was not a very successful ring; for one thing it was too elastic, the men outside pushed too much, and the sides contracted according to the excitability of the units, and then, in spite of the few sacks strewn around, the rough stony ground was a bad place for a man to down on.

I can give no adequate description of the encounter, but Yorky had the best of it throughout. Taffy was hefty with his tools, but

too wild; and then he was a shorter man, he had not the reach of Yorky, who kept surprisingly cool, or had hands on his temper, I am not sure which. Anyway, after the second round, Taffy struck all about and wasted wind on curses, whilst Yorky kept his mouth shut, his eyes clear, and his blows steadily drumming on Taffy's left ribs. Taffy must have had the heart of a lion, or it would have burst under the Yorkshireman's blows.

In the seventh bout Yorky changed his tactics; he pressed Taffy more, followed him round and went for his face, and twice Taffy's head rattled on the stones.

At the beginning of the eighth round Taffy went mad. He mopped and mowed like a village idiot, and as he left Big Walt's knee—Clinker was seconding Yorky—there was an ugly feeling in the ring that something was to happen.

Yorky left his corner calmly. He had scarcely a mark on him and was almost as fresh and upright as at the start, whereas Taffy was bruised all over; his left eye was half filled and lumps as big as eggs showed where he had struck the stones in falling. His face was covered with blood, his hair was matted with it, and his eyes glared madly in the shifting light of the ducks. He was back beyond the savages. It did not require much imagination to see him as an ape. He came to the centre, not erect nor even crouching as a fighter does, but bent nearly double with his knees forward, his back arched, and his teeth showing between tight lips, his eyebrows drawn over his eyes and his nostrils dilated with the laboured breath. But ugly and sinister as he looked, he was more in keeping with his surroundings than the stolid Yorkshireman. Both were stark naked except for their boots. The men around were stripped to the waist and their faces were tense with excitement; they had ceased to shout and waited silently for the recommencement of the fight.

A small stone detached itself and rattled down the side of the cavern, and the rhythmical beat of the air pump at the shaft foot hissed time for the fighters' feet.

No other sound could be heard.

The sides of the cavern were dark and distant as revealed by the ghostly glimmer from the ducks. The shaft boy, a child of twelve, who on no account was allowed to leave the bottom of the shaft, was crouched on hands and knees trying to get a glimpse of the proceedings by peering between the legs of the men around the ring.

The thing that was to happen happened as soon as the bout commenced. Yorky stepped up evidently determined to finish Taffy off. Taffy gave a peculiar gurgle as he fainted with his right, and then—before anyone dreamed of his intention—he planted a terrific kick on Yorky's knee, following it up with one on the skull as Yorky crashed to the ground.

Then Hell was loose.

Those navvies loved fighting, but it must be fair fisticuffing; kicking was for mules. The cavern rang with their growls and in two seconds a score of fists fell on the crouching form of Taffy, five score fingers closed over his naked flesh, he was flung aloft as a boy flings a ball and crashed to the earth a shapeless, grisly mass. They would have torn him to bits if Big Walt had not been there.

Clinker beckoned me to give him a hand as Big Walt, with shouts of "up tools and turn to," shouldered the mob apart.

A number of the saner men took Yorky out and douched him with water, whilst Clinker and I laid hands on the inanimate Taffy and carried him into Big Walt's cabin—a small wooden shed in the corner of the widening, containing a few sacks, some tools, and a locked cupboard full of candles and explosives.

We laid Taffy on the bench, closed his eyes, covered his wrecked body with sacking, shut the door, and waited silently for Big Walt, who came in a few minutes later.

After a brief glance at the thing on the bench, Big Walt turned to Clinker and asked, as he nodded his head in my direction: "Is he safe?" And Clinker replied slowly: "Safe as Iron."

"Then he'd better get the fool's clobber and bring it here," said Big Walt, and I picked up a duck and went out to the heading. To the many queries as to "how the swine stuck," I replied that he was "badly rattled but would tool again."

When I returned to the cabin Big Walt was just shoving Taffy under the bench, whilst Clinker was sorting out a number of sacks and some thick twine. As soon as Clinker had finished his preparations he took the clothes from me and stuffed them with sacks, then bracing the dummy together with twine, he laid it on the bench and covered it with more sacking.

It was then five o'clock and in an hour the working day would be over, so—before the full crowd left the bottom—the deputy Taffy was hurried up the shaft and taken to Big Walt's hut where our

gang lodged and the next day it was given out that he had gone away during the night.

So much for the gang.

With navvies it is come day, go day, God send pay day. A man is working in Scotland one day and, in a month, maybe, in America, and the old country sees him never again; and navvies do not have inquisitive relatives to worry about them—unless, like Clinker, they have been extravagant in the matter of wives.

In Taffy's case, no one at number three knew much about him, and certainly none of his people knew anything about number three, so I accepted the ruling of Big Walt and Clinker and at midnight the three of us were let down the shaft by the night watchman.

I had never been in the widening without the full gang before; and for the first time it struck me what an enormous hole it was. Our three ducks only intensified the dank and miserable gloom. To the swing of the lamps the arched roof seemed to move and twist; one moment it was as far above us as the sky and the next it descended almost on our heads.

Big Walt insisted that we must search the widening and both headings to see that no one was watching us—a most preposterous idea.

After the search we spent some time in discussing the best place for a grave, and finally decided on a spot about twenty yards from the widening in the three-four heading. At this point there had been a quantity of loose, shaley stuff; a bricklayer had built up a wall to a height of four feet and omitted to fill in the cavity behind as was customary in such cases.

There we tombed Taffy.

Whilst Clinker and I fetched the body, Big Walt mixed a quantity of cement and water to form a coffin.

It had not been difficult for Big Walt to squeeze the body under the bench whilst it was warm and pliable, but to get it out when stiff and cold was not an easy matter; the legs were twisted round one of the legs of the bench and we had trouble in unlocking them.

We did not speak a word to each other. Our own movements and the scraping of Big Walt's shovel in the tunnel as he kneaded and pressed and cut the mortar were the only human sounds that could be heard; and somehow these sounds did not break the preternatural silence, they were apart from it. For it was as if there

were two silences; one of them we broke, the other could not be broken, not even by the unhuman sounds from outside, neither the pattering of water drops, the squeal of a rat, nor the occasional fall of small stones.

The cramped body was exceedingly difficult to carry, it slipped and twisted in our hands, the clamminess peculiar to corpses produced uncanny sensations, and it was with grunts of relief that we laid our burden on the ground outside the wall.

Big Walt was already in the tomb spreading the mortar when we arrived, and in a couple of minutes we had hoisted Taffy up and dropped him with a splash into his cemented grave. The booted feet and bent limbs followed the formless head over the edge of the wall, and I took a duck and rearranged the disordered stuff in the cabin.

"It'll be a big rat as worries through that lot," said Big Walt as he and Clinker set to work with shovels and hurriedly filled in the remainder of the mortar.

Then we went home to supper.

TWO POEMS

BY LOUIS UNTERMAYER

WITH A VOLUME OF HEINE

Like some young flower, cool and white
With the stars' kiss still on its brow,
You shine through my heart's dusk, and light
The dark concern that gathers now.

Half on my lips, a fearful hope
Starts like a prayer, already planned.
Toward your bright head my fingers grope . . .
But something holds my hand.

Prayers are not what you want. I see
That, when all other beauty fails,
You will not alter, you will be
So white and young—and hard as nails.

MATINÉE

The poet stood reciting
Examples of his art,
Considerately removing
The veils about his heart.

Eager and self-revealing,
He did his stripping well;
With every burning poem
Another garment fell.

With passionate abandon
He flung each cloth away;
Exulting in the pleasure
Of noble self-display.

Until upon the platform
Were piled his draperies.
And still the poet gestured,
Naked and quite at ease.

And no one screamed or fainted;
There was no stir or start.
The ladies all applauded
At such a show of Art.

POETRY—OUR FIRST NATIONAL ART

BY JAMES OPPENHEIM

RUSSIA first found herself as a people, that is, as a self-conscious nation, through prose fiction; Germany and England through the poetic play; Greece, Rome, and Italy through epics. It begins to appear as if the United States (what a name for a nation, and yet how apt!) is finding herself through a rather loosened-up lyric poetry.

Our land's name reveals our dilemma in art. A society of states, in which each state is a society of races, is not a nation in the Old World sense; it is not an organic fusion, but a collection, in which the differences are more marked than the likenesses. France, we say, has a soul, meaning that Frenchmen, to use James's phrase, "dip their roots in the same pool of consciousness," or more accurately, sub-consciousness; but Americans are held together not by unconscious identity, but by conscious ideals and interests. Americanism is not so much an impulse as a set of ready-made attitudes. Since these can be learned in a short time, the Americanization of immigrants goes on with rapidity.

One might expect then that an American national art would be an impossibility. The national novel, play, or epic requires typical characters, heroes who are the reflection of a people; but where is our typical American? And by typical I do not mean the conscious attitudes and manners of a man, but his essential character; for great art does not so much reveal the garb, speech, and habits, as those deep unconscious forces which differentiate one people from another. If, for instance, I see a certain kinship between J. J. Hill, Daniel Boone, Billy Sunday, and Theodore Roosevelt, or between Emerson, Dr. Eliot, John Dewey, and Woodrow Wilson, or between Lincoln, Gene Debs, John Brown, Mark Twain, and Jane Addams, I also find that, tested by the acid of art, they fail as national symbols. For not one of these is the national character *heightened and intensified*, but rather a sport, a divergence, a personal success. We must not be fooled by the fact that each group held certain ideas, attitudes, and manners in common; these are

environmental and not hereditary; and the very fact that there is such a startling sameness in American exteriors argues that there is a corresponding diversity in the unconscious. We wear the same feathers but underneath we are immigrants from many lands.

This explains why our novelists never rise beyond a depiction of manners to a revealing of character. To begin with, only a few of the men mentioned could be subjected to deep treatment. Most of them are stiff fronts, behind which vacancy takes the place of the passions, tumults, *Weltanschauung*, and mystic grandeur which belong to the unconscious. Imagine Woodrow Wilson or Billy Sunday or T. R. as the hero of a great novel! How quickly each would become wooden and unconvincing! The trouble is that they are too typically American; the trouble is that a people united only by conscious bonds, have, for the sake of unity, denied their unconscious and alien character; and behind the striking samenesses gapes a void.

What then of such genuine and deep men as Lincoln and Gene Debs? At first glance we seem to have found what we are seeking. But alas, at second glance we see that their very depth differentiates them from the American people, and that when they are taken over into art they are like foreign particles, austere and terribly separated from their social environment. Our nationalism screamed in the late war: where did it hold "malice toward none, and mercy for all," to say nothing of democracy? Where was "a race of Lincolns"?

Is the case then hopeless? Possibly yes for any art that requires typic characters; and curiously not so for semi-lyrical poetry. Mark Twain came the nearest to writing a national novel in *Huckleberry Finn*; and this for the excellent reason that taking a boy as his hero, he could approximate the psychic development of the nation. But we cannot have great national art so long as boys are the measure of our value.

In poetry, however, the case is different. Poetry is an excellent medium for giving environmental colour, snap-shots, ideals and abstract tendencies; it can give the vague flavour of a mixed society; and best of all it can reveal, not through a symbol, but directly, the unconscious of the poet. Now this unconscious is something passed on to the poet through a long descent; it is the common racial inheritance, and differs only according to the stock

of the individual. Since he does not have to gather his expression round a typic character, that is, be concrete, he can vaguely allow that mystic depth which is common to all men. And since he strains this, as it were, through the sieve of the American environment, the American ideals, manners, scenery, and chaos, he gets a product which is universal on the one hand but on the other with what might be called the American flavour.

If we examine Walt Whitman we find that the surface or exterior is an arrangement of American facts and creeds, lifeless and discrete in themselves, but become vital because they are fused with the revelation of his own unconscious. In short, we have something universal, or say, human in the broadest sense—something equally the property of every race—camouflaged by American paint. That this is not America is obvious. Yet "'tis enough, 'twill serve"—for it is indubitably American. We are all this universal masked by Americanism. Hence, its truly national character. Walt was Dutch, yet Carl Sandburg who is Swedish can prance his soul out to the same tunes and get a national expression with only a slightly different tinge. For, as I said before, this universal in us is conditioned by the stock we come from. Whitman and Sandburg differ from each other only in so far as the Dutch and Swedish differ.

Walt Whitman then gave us our first national art. How did he turn the trick? We had several other excellent poets, yet they never found the key which to-day unlocks American expression. I think it was because he realized that he must take a bold, conscious plunge, and not be afraid of creating art deliberately. Our poetry had been Colonial—whether English or European. Hence, the first task was to throw overboard those traditions; and the second was to find an expression more native to ourselves. But where find this? We have no folk, no soil song or literature: we have only our American speech, the resultant of new environment, mixture of races and new experience. This American speech is decidedly different in flavour and construction from English speech. It is not Colonial, but native, that is, environmental. It is a speech, however, which is not strictly polite. I think of Dante deciding to write in Italian vernacular instead of in Latin. Our Latin was our literary English. Whitman decided along Dante's line; namely, to write in American. The meaning of this is that he decided to

take the only native expression we have, our conversation, and intensify it.

The result is curious. Without the rootage of folk-song and folk-art there is a certain thinness, a loss of overtones. But there are real compensations—the work is, as I said, indubitably American, fresh, spacious, and free. Perhaps also it might be said that Whitman raises American conversation to oratory; that he carries the common speech into the speaker's stand, and attempts thus to give it a less personal, a more collective fibre.

Our new generation of poets has been unable to ignore Whitman. The strange service he performed for us was to give us a substitute for folk-song. That is to say, we can't go back to folk-art, but can go back to Whitman and thus catch for our own work the overtones of an American past. That the result need not be strictly Whitmanic is obvious. Masters in Spoon River has used conversation and discarded oratory; Frost, Untermeyer, and Lindsay have done the same and discarded free verse; Amy Lowell has developed the form and wherever advisable discarded conversation.

It is necessary to note here that the Whitmanic attempt has appeared in our fiction and essay. Parallel with Whitman came Emerson, and out of Emerson, William James, and writers like Dewey, Veblen, and Randolph Bourne, save that James and Bourne, more than the others, incorporate the conversational in the Whitman manner. Dreiser and Anderson in fiction also spring from Whitman, though here we have the forerunner, Mark Twain; but their success I think is limited by the reasons given above. The result of all this many-stranded development, as well as an inner evolution, is a marked change in American conversation. At Whitman's time there was a choice between Colonial and popular. The choice is different to-day. Popular expression is not the only kind that is American; we have the beginning of an intelligentsia, and this younger world has a conversation of its own. That this conversation bears resemblance to the speech of H. G. Wells and Masfield is not surprising—for these two writers, as well as Rolland, have been under American influence. Wells owes much to William James, Rolland exceedingly much to Whitman. No better proof of the vitality of American style could be produced than this influence abroad.

I should say that our new poetry leans either to the conversation

of our intelligentsia or to that of the mass and that its form is divided between the Whitmanic and the traditional. Perhaps more purely than the rest it is Sandburg who carries on the strict Whitman tradition, and takes the common speech, with its slang, as his basis. And it is quite possible that he is the most vital singer of us all. At any rate it would seem as if he, Frost, and Masters wrote most directly out of themselves, putting the accent on expression and giving second place to so-called style.

Recently, in one of our book stores, I went through a bundle of insurgent English poetry. I was shocked into the realization that the art-centre of English poetic expression has shifted from England to the United States: against the stale music, phonographic repetition, and forced freshness of the Englishmen I heard the prairie-breezes of Sandburg, the poignant deep cry of Masters, the colourful tumult of Amy Lowell, and other voices in our masterful chorus, behind which the sea of Whitman forever thunders. And this, I thought, is America. Have we great poetry, barring our one Homer? We do not know; but we do know that we have a genuine living art. An art, I should say, that will grow just in so far as our poets, after having assimilated them, learn to overcome the great masters—just in so far as they release themselves from the dominant influence of every tradition, including the Whitmanic, and trust to their deepest impulse. It is not by saying, "Go to, I will be American," but by allowing the direct impact of environment and the direct response, that they will produce a truer and more American art.

A FEMINIST BABY

BY EDNA CLARE BRYNER

MY mother is a feminist and my father a radical who supports my mother in her views only. How could I escape? Before I drew my first breath I was a radical. I realize that as a radical baby I must start my career early in life. That is why I am writing what is to follow. If I wait until I am grown up and have greater command of language, I shall be so interested in the problems of grownups that I shall have entirely forgotten my early struggle for existence.

I am a brainy little thing. Otherwise I should not have had the ghost of a chance of being born; for I had to fight for my birth. Every argument I could scrape up in favour of the perpetuation of the race I had to keep dinging into my mother to accomplish my existence. As far as I know, this is the most radical thing that has ever been done.

Not that my mother did not want me. Indeed, she had been wanting me for a number of years. She wanted a lot of other things, too. She wanted always to earn her own living so that she need not be dependent for support on any man. She wanted to help solve all the vital problems of the day. She wanted to be free to go hither and thither to find out first-hand what the miners in Kamchatka struck for and what the Bolsheviki really are.

She kept putting me off every time I asked her, "How about my being born?" until I decided that if ever I was to have a feminist career (for which I was certainly destined) I must get born soon or feminism would be out of fashion. I therefore asked her how she could ever know what children really mean unless she had me. She replied that she had talked that matter over with her own mother, who had had half a dozen and who later became a feminist. "Just an uncomfortable episode," was what she said her mother said.

"Of course I shall give you some discomfort, dear mother," I went on, trying not to show that I was hurt at such an expression. "I cannot help that. But I promise you—"

"It is not discomfort I fear," returned my mother impatiently.

"No, no," I answered soothingly. "Of course you don't." Hastily I changed my tactics. "What do you think other women will say, the ones who know you as a feminist, as one who believes that women should earn their own living in spite of the handicap of bearing and rearing children, when they see that you cannot live out the theory you advocate? They will say, 'That's all right. She earns her own living. Why shouldn't she? What else has she to do? She hasn't any children. If she had my three, now—'"

"Three!" exclaimed my mother. "That would take ten years out of my life."

"Never mind three," I said quickly, feeling I had gone too far. "You ought at least to have me—one, I mean." Let my brothers and sisters argue their own cases. I had enough of a task in presenting my own.

"Some day I suppose I shall have one," my mother murmured. "To-day, however, matters are in such a state that it takes all of us intellectuals to clear the path for others to follow. We must sacrifice our intimate desires."

"Do you really want me then?" I cried happily. "Have me, have me! I will carry on the torch for you! Who can do it so well as your own child? Your immortality!" I stopped abruptly. My mother had started writing an article on a topic which this conversation had stimulated. I felt that she was exploiting me, never letting me become myself, but only using me for her own purposes. I sulked. She would be sorry some day when she was an old, old lady and had no dear little grandchildren.

Another time I did not let her off so easily. "It isn't that I want to be just for myself," I pleaded. "I am more than myself." The words came naturally to me from a play my mother had just seen, a play *OF THE FUTURE* it was called. "I am the link between you and countless generations. Unless you have irreproachable reasons" (my mother became uneasy at this) "you are denying wilfully to the long line of those who projected you into a world in which you are glad to live their further projection through me into new and countless generations." Eloquently I threw out the challenge, just like the lady lecturer in the play: "Dare you defy the strength of the plasm within you seeking to throw out its force into new individuals to replace you in the great scheme of evolution?"

I thought my arguments finished. Time passed. I felt myself

no nearer creation. Shamelessly I went back to selfish arguments. One evening when my mother had come home tired out and bored with her evening, I said to her ingratiatingly, "If you had me, you would never be bored. You would have a plaything of which you would never tire. Those stupid men and women say the same things over and over again. I should change all the time. Never would you know from one minute to the next how I would act or what I would say."

"Oh, oh," said my mother, holding her head in her hands. "How tired I am! To-night I never want to see or hear anything radical again. To-morrow I shall be all right. How tired I am!"

After all, what really brought me into the world was that I became exasperated one day and simply yelled, "I want to be born! I want to be born! Why don't you have me, cowardly calf? I've got to be born!"—and first thing I knew I was well on my way to having my wish made effective.

So far, excellent. Of course, my mother must keep on with her job. To hear her talk you would think that all radicalism would die instantly the minute she stopped working. Her work must be tremendously difficult and exhausting. At first I was frightened, because I did not know what effect it might have on me. As time went on, however, I became reassured. Indeed, her work seemed very easy to me.

Every morning she was carried upstairs in an elevator to a small room in a large building. She sat in a comfortable chair and wrote some sort of manifesto. (I think I inherit this ability from her.) She discussed intricate and delicate questions about the freeing of something or some one. In the evening she met gay people who had work somewhat like hers. Sometimes she went to hear music or to see a play.

I felt I was lucky to have chosen a mother who had such an easy time. As far as my welfare was concerned, it wasn't half bad to be mothered by some one who earned her living so easily and had such a good time. I was glad that she did not work all day in a factory hunched up over a machine. I was still more glad that she did not stay at home all the time cooking, and sweeping, and washing and ironing.

I couldn't help wishing, however, that my mother would stay out of doors, not in the noisy, dirty, ugly city but in the country

where there were green fields, and maybe a huge forest, and some dripping water. Maybe I am sentimental; but I should like to know that that's what she wanted to do while I was being created.

Finally I was born. That was rather bad for me. As there is a whole book written on the subject of how it feels to be born, I shall say nothing about it. At the time, I think it was worse for my mother than for me. Now she has entirely recovered from it, but I shall never recover.

I have been in the world two years. Until now I have held my peace. But my present circumstances have aroused me to make my first articulate revolt against tyranny. The fact is that every day when my mother goes to work I am taken to a nursery where I spend the best part of the day with a lot of other tiny children. I have funny things to lace up and button. I have good food to eat and plenty of sleep. In the evening some one takes me home and my mother plays with me a few minutes before I am put to bed.

This arrangement solves the problem of me for my mother. But how about my own problem? I do not mean to complain, but I must tell you that my radical tendencies make me abhor this way of disposing of me. I would much rather live in my own house where everything has a funny smell which seems good and companionable to me. I want my father to hold me on his lap while he reads one of his stories out loud so that his round dark voice drones in my ear and puts me to sleep. I want my mother nearly all the time I am awake. Just why, I cannot tell you. There is something peculiar about it. Every one needs a companion. A great big, soft, friendly, clean dog would do, but not so well as a friendly human being, and no human being so well as a mother.

In concluding this document I should like to state that I consider myself most courageous in performing the initial feat of bringing about my entry into the world. Although I never spoke of it, I knew all the time that I should have to undergo infinite experimentation in the way of being brought up and that every one would expect me, in spite of so much distraction, to be more radical than my mother.

I realized, also, that I should have to submit to limitations to which children of non-radicals do not have to bow. For example, if I am a boy (I am too young yet, by the Binet test, to know my

sex), I shall have to wear my hair in locks just long enough to cover up my coat collar and snaggle around my ears. If I am a girl (I feel rather certain that I am a girl), never shall I be able to see my long brown curls stream in the wind as I run along the Palisades, for I shall have to wear my hair cropped close like the mane of a shorn Shetland pony.

I have not dared to hope for brothers and sisters. As I am the first-born, I can never have older ones to tease and annoy me so delightfully as I should like to have them do. I shall never have younger ones unless they are more argumentative than I, for my mother seems entirely satisfied with me.

THE AUTHORESS OF THE WAY OF ALL FLESH

SAMUEL BUTLER: A MEMOIR. *By Henry Festing Jones.*
12mo. Two volumes. 979 pages. The Macmillan Com-
pany. New York.

MISS SAVAGE becomes an obsession. Some years ago when I was studying Butler for my critical work I had to fight hard to ward her off, because I knew nothing about her and Mr. Festing Jones wanted her for this monument which he has raised to the memory of his friend. She obsessed Butler to the extent of making him believe that a woman wrote Homer, and she has also obsessed myself to the point of making me give the above absurd title to this review. She was malicious, she admitted and gloried in her habit of lying, but she was feminine and feline, detestable and adorable. Mr. Festing Jones simply cannot trust himself to speak of her, and has clearly been at some pains to avoid her obsessive power. Butler was her victim, helpless under her hands as she dug out of him the obstinate humour which was necessary for the completion of her existence, perhaps in order to make the sharpness of her own wit enduring. Butler, on the other hand, owed her just as much because he could not live without obsessions, and at the time she turned up he was bored almost to the point of extinction with his beloved obsession of his father. Miss Savage's letters explain the strange power that came into this odd little man in middle life and left him after her death. The correspondence of these two is like that of Abelard and Heloise, only in this instance the protagonists are two queer little middle-aged persons in late-Victorian London.

Butler had been driven as far as New Zealand by the obsession of his father and he returned to England when he thought Darwin, by upsetting the Anglican faith, had made that country safe for him. He returned with an incubus, an impecunious friend whom he had undertaken to set on his feet. To this friend he gave a quarter of his income, partly out of absurd generosity and partly to avoid being like his father, who had effectively tied him up by making a reversion contingent. The Butlers, father and son, squabbled for years over money, and both thoroughly enjoyed it. They were nineteenth

century Englishmen, wretched in the processes of industrial revolution, and taking it out of each other in consequence. The English have a pig-headed capacity of endurance for which they are not as a rule given sufficient credit. They will make a mess of things and then just hang on stubbornly until life re-asserts itself and the mess becomes a joke. To Samuel Butler that kind of joke was the all-important thing in life, and therefore he had no use for success or prosperity, which led nowhere. The joke was the divine thing, the intimation of immortality, and therefore he could not endure people like his father or Charles Darwin or Miss Savage, who took life and themselves seriously. Of the three Miss Savage was the most really serious and therefore his relationship with her was maintained for the most part through correspondence. He was afraid of her just as he was afraid of his father and Charles Darwin, with an intellectual rather than a personal fear.

These three obsessions made up his real life, which he decorated rather than enriched with friendships. Let us consider them in their order. Butler, senior, was one of your Hell-fire Christians, so enamoured of Hell that they turn this life into a foretaste of it: no room for the divine joke *there*. Hence Butler's horror of his father and his fanatical struggle with him. Fear of Hell-fire, however, had kept the English fairly decent—and for the ordinary purposes of life Butler asked no more. Then came the publication of *The Origin of Species*, and the young Samuel saw that his father was dished. The menace of Hell-fire had lost its validity, because the theory of evolution demonstrated that there was no such place. Hurrah! then, for Darwin and Huxley who would at last make room in civilized life for the divine joke. Butler in New Zealand felt that he could return to civilization, and did so, only to find to his disgust that there was less room for the divine joke than ever because to the solemnity of the Bishops had been added that of the scientists. Worse than that, Darwin by letting loose such phrases as the survival of the fittest and insisting upon the mindlessness of evolution, had authorized the ruthlessness of the industrial revolution as it gathered momentum for its work of world-wide devastation. A materialistic philosophy had been evolved which for sheer humbug knocked Anglican and Hell-fire Christianity into a cocked hat. The tyranny of machines which Butler had thought of in New Zealand as a whimsey was in England rapidly becoming the most appalling reality. He saw the danger to his beloved joke and did what he

could to defend it by attacking his old enemy, Anglican Christianity. This new obsession was forcing out the old one: Charles Darwin stepped into the place hitherto occupied by his father. Erewhon did something, gave him at least some satisfaction but not enough. A Darwinian world would be too frightful to live in because no one would be able to laugh in it, and no one need be kind any more or even decent. A letter from Darwin to Butler is illuminating:

"Have you ever read Huxley's article or articles on 'Animal Automatism,' two or three years ago in *The Contemporary*? He tried to show that consciousness was something superadded to nervous mechanism, like the striking of a clock is added to the ordinary going parts. I mean that the consciousness as we know it has nothing to do with the act, which is a question of nerve-machinery.

"You seem to me to have gone on the reverse tack—instead of reducing consciousness to a passive looker-on, you have, I think, made consciousness into an active cause, a producer of energy."

That was precisely what Butler had done, though he was too excited and too much in earnest to be able to say so clearly. He felt more than he saw of the implications of the elevation of Darwin's scientific statement into a philosophy. He was brave enough to lose his head—in order to find it; and, refusing to side with either the Anglicans or the Darwinians, pleased no one and was left severely alone as a crank, which he was, though a crank blessed with a sense of humour and a belief that life knew its business better than men or the society of men did theirs. He was a crank in that he could not be fair to Darwin, nor to himself. In the intense excitement of seeing the world go slowly mad while he remained sane, he lost all sense of self-preservation and was inevitably forced into ruin. The work he had set himself in the writing of *Life and Habit* and its successors was work for which no one would pay him, and he could do no other. This was too absorbing and too urgent. For a moment he lost his sense of humour and was betrayed into the scandal of insulting Darwin, who, poor old gentleman, could not make out what this surprising adversary was driving at. Butler himself was not too clear about it. He could make his meaning clear but not the implications of his meaning. He had humour and common sense but no imagination, for to him that had meant Hell-fire and all that his father had stood for. A shocking dilemma this: if only Butler

had been a humourless man like Ruskin or Carlyle or William Morris! But the thing he was fighting for was precisely the intuition of the divine joke of the universe which is called the sense of humour, and it made Butler, one of the most insighted men of his time, a Conservative. The strain was too great: he knew that what he had tried to do was all-important, but he could not find acceptance from the world or deliverance from his own difficulties. He had tried to become a painter and was not a good painter, and in writing he remained an amateur. The professionals could overlook him because he could not—or would not—learn their jargon.

Life, with delightful sense of humour, presented him with a third obsession, the lady, Miss Eliza Mary Ann Savage, who turned him into a writer of potent influence, and of whom he wrote, as in his old age he turned it all over in his whimsical brain, the following sonnet:

"She was too kind, wooed too persistently,
 Wrote moving letters to me day by day:
 The more she wrote, the more unmoved was I.
 The more she gave, the less could I repay.
 Therefore I grieve not that I was not loved,
 But that, being loved, I could not love again.
 I liked: but like and love are far removed:
 Hard though I tried to love I tried in vain,
 For she was plain and lame and fat and short
 Forty and over-kind. Hence it befell
 That, though I loved her in a certain sort,
 Yet did I love too wisely but not well.
 Ah! Had she been more beauteous or less kind
 She might have found me of another mind."

He was always most obstinately unromantic and unimaginative or he would have known that she had found the artist in him and could not rest until she had brought it to light and life. How much of what is commonly known as love was mixed with this desire in her it is possible only to guess: in all likelihood she wanted to discover in the odd shy little man what he would not—or could not—discover for himself, the sensitive, quick perception of the flame of life which had been almost numbed by Butler senior, who so lamentably confused the flame of life with the flame of Hell. In one letter of Miss Savage's there is an almost gasping eagerness that

the real quality in Butler might be released by the disaster that had overtaken him, but it never was. For her the relationship was a quick, intense drama, so vivid indeed that the pressure of it sometimes made her wit almost rise into a shrill scream to Butler: "Can't you see what you are? Can't you see what you are?" Butler could not but feel that, and with male obtuseness thought she was exclaiming in every nerve: "Can't you see what you are *to me*?" Nothing of the kind: she knew herself. She had only beauty of soul, that beauty which is active in its love, and that she gave in full measure, as Butler well knew after she had died. He enjoyed the joke of it, of course, that the only possible wife life had ever presented him with was impossible. Yet she prevailed and married him by letter and hen-pecked him into being artist enough to write *The Way of All Flesh*.

From their own words, Mr. Festing Jones has created his wonderful story, curious and delightful in its perfection, charming in its surrounding detail. After Miss Savage's death Butler relapsed into the eighteenth century, giving up the nineteenth as hopeless. His father died and left him plenty of money so that he could become the rich, eccentric, travelling English milord, almost, like so many Englishmen of strong character, a person out of fiction, more fit to live with Parson Adams and Squire Western than with the rather grubby, savourless people who were beginning to throng London. He attached Mr. Jones to himself, and Alfred, and escaped into Italy and Sicily where he could still find people who, as he said, lived "under grace and not under the law"—and he was happy. Probably he was never anything else even during the dreadful years when he lived through both a mental and a financial crisis. He understood happiness: that is a rare faculty. The God he imagined was a happy God and Him he served all his days. He enjoyed his isolation and his notoriety, but most of all he enjoyed the appreciation that came to him at last, taking a childish pleasure in everything that was said and written about him. Possibly he is having a wonderful time pestering Handel and Homer and Shakespeare with posers about their work, or telling them what a wonderful person Miss Eliza Mary Ann Savage was. He would loathe the comparison, and I am sure Mr. Jones will detest it; but, being romantic, I like to think of them as consorting with Abelard and Heloise, who will perfectly understand all that went on inside these two dowdy, odd, ill-assorted but immortal little people.—GILBERT CANNAN

ONE KIND OF REALIST

THE BISHOP and Other Stories. By Anton Chekhov.
12mo. 302 pages. Macmillan Company. New York.

IN method Chekhov would appear to be a detached realist of the Impersonal Succession; in character one suspects him of being a realist by sheer fascination with his perceptions. There is a matter-of-factness about his ironical folk and middle-class tales that would reduce their content to so much ineloquent information were it not for his seeming-ingenuous absorption in his narrative, and his reliable and perennial sense of effect, which is so fine that the edged picturing survives even the process of translation. He has that bias for a diminished range of spirit which Henry James thought deplorable in Flaubert: no splendid persons, no fine cases, no heightened characters.

One feels Chekhov, in these stories, to be a confirmed dealer in the lore of human petty actuality, the endless small defeats that men accomplish for one another. Underneath and carefully never overflowing his impersonality, his perfect assiduity to fact, is as abiding an irony as Thomas Hardy's, without Hardy's admiration for men and women, with a touch, perhaps, of something cousin-german to contempt. We hear from Chekhov truly little of the stature and dignity of man; his typical characters cut uninspiring figures enough. The third tale in the present volume, *The Letter*, is, for instance, a thoroughly Chekhovian piece. Deacon Liubimov, in this story, is so much disturbed by the wild career of an absent raffish son that he implores Father Fyodor to help him compose a letter which will head the young rake-hell back to the strait gate. Father Fyodor dictates, Deacon Liubimov writes. In the Deacon's eyes the result is a masterpiece of reproach. To know that his old father could be capable of such dignity and eloquence must infallibly shame the scapegrace into righteousness. But before the Deacon could send off this imposing exhortation he must needs sit down and add on his own account at the bottom of the letter:

"They have sent us a new inspector. He's much friskier than the old one. He's a great one for dancing and talking, and there's noth-

ing he can't do, so that all the Govorovsky girls are crazy about him. Our military chief will soon get the sack too, they say. High time he did!"

The poor old Deacon is fairly embalmed in irony.

Yet Chekhov, notwithstanding dry exactnesses like the foregoing, has a fresh and fascinated cordiality of picturing that few realists can muster. He does not furnish, it is true, the filled-full sense of acquaintance that a three-ply Saxon realistic epic lavishes on us; he is not the realist of the itemized account. And he is as little disposed to the accurate, morose baldness, the mere tractarian ripping of decent illusions that Artzibashev practises. His realism is not his theory, really; it is his character, his unflagging native interest. Conditioned always, it is true, by a very article-of-faith reserve, he has, more than most realists, a robust inheritance in the foundation instinct of the natural dramatist: the frank appetite for personality, even abject personality, the gusto for *Sturm und Drang*, even if they are petty, the power of stomach, the zest in acquaintance, the expert interest in everything human. His eyes have seen all with the most absorbed interest, his ears have heard all with the freshest wonder. His perceptions have never gone stale; impressions have formed upon his sensibility inexhaustibly, always full coloured, varied, insistent, real. He may work in the spirit of irony and be as laden with disillusion as Artzibashev, but he writes with a resiliency that Artzibashev, for all his simooms of power and passion, does not know. Few realists have known so well as Chekhov how to be spellbound. The capital instinct is in him; he is as intent as a fancier when the matter is the items of character and appearance, or the terms of personality, or the set of situation and scene. Through his detachment and against his irony shows something of the robust Pepysian, the thoughtful but eager folk-lorist, the chimney-cornerer with the gift of vividness. His vision of humanity and its purposes is not intricate, but the consideration of life has never failed to fill his mind and absorb his heart.

CHARLES K. TRUEBLOOD

REVOLUTION AND THE FRENCH PEASANT

A HISTORY OF FRANCE FROM THE EARLIEST TIMES TO THE TREATY OF VERSAILLES. By *William Stearns Davis*. Illustrated. 12mo. 642 pages. Houghton Mifflin Company. Boston.

PROFESSOR DAVIS has succeeded admirably in compressing the essential facts of French political history into a volume of six hundred pages. His limited space excludes detailed interpretation of separate events, and the author is also compelled to give only the most perfunctory notice to the economic phenomena which are associated with various stages of French history. On the political side, however, the work is reasonably complete, and Professor Davis shows an excellent sense of proportion in laying special stress upon what may be called the revolutionary era of French history, the period which begins with the meeting of the States-General in 1789 and ends with the suppression of the Commune in 1871.

Throughout this period France was in a state of suspended civil war. On one side stood the bourgeoisie, the large and small investors and landowners, the classes which had gained power and wealth as a result of the overthrow of the feudal monarchy. The dominance of these elements is apparent alike in the States-General, in the Directory, in the monarchism of Louis Philippe, and in the imperialism of Louis Napoleon. Against this system of perpetual conservatism under various outward forms the working-class population of Paris, the men who had been captivated by the fierce levelling doctrines of Marat and Hebert, stood ranged in sullen discontent. Omitting riots and minor disturbances, this discontent burst out in actual fighting on four occasions: in 1793, in 1830, in 1848, and in 1871. In all these outbreaks the peasants played the decisive role. Their support carried the Revolution through to triumphant success, despite the excesses and follies of the Jacobin leaders. Their indifference thwarted the republicans who fought on the barricades in 1830. In 1848 and in 1871 the peasants actively sided with the bourgeoisie in putting down the Communists. This shift of peasant psychology from radicalism to conservatism can be understood only

by a consideration of the profound changes in the system of land-ownership which were brought about by the Revolution.

Throughout the Middle Ages the peasants in France, as elsewhere on the Continent, were a harried, miserable, and persecuted class. Their intolerable suffering sometimes found expression in futile jacqueries, which were invariably repressed with the utmost brutality. Their condition grew worse, if possible, during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, as a result of the growth of absentee landlordism and the heavy increases of taxation necessitated by the wars of Louis XIV. In 1789 the great majority of the French peasants had almost literally nothing to lose. Consequently they became the natural allies of the Parisian extremists. They instinctively felt that only the most drastic changes in the government could permanently improve their wretched condition.

From 1789 to 1794 the workers of Paris formed the spearhead of the Jacobin movement. The grimy mobs of the Faubourg Saint Antoine stormed the Bastille, forced the royal family to come from Versailles to Paris, urged on the execution of the King, and brought the Revolution to its last stage of radicalism by expelling the Girondists from the Convention. But Paris alone could not have made and maintained the Revolution without the more or less active cooperation of the provinces. Outside of La Vendée this cooperation was generally given. The efforts of the Girondists to rouse the departments against the capital met with total failure. The peasants responded to the *levée en masse* in sufficient numbers to beat off the invading forces of the coalition.

Had it lacked the hearty support of the peasants, the Revolution must have foundered miserably, from incompetent leadership if from no other cause. Now that the initial horror inspired by the Reign of Terror and the threat of world-wide revolution has subsided there is a general disposition to exaggerate the ability of the men who headed the French government in 1793 and 1794. Even Professor Davis, who is very far from sharing the radical views of the Jacobins, pays a high tribute to them in declaring that "they saved France." It would be more accurate to say that France was saved in spite of them. Outside of Carnot, the Revolution did not produce a single first-rate organizing genius. The restoration of the Bourbons was averted by the fierce courage and patriotism of the French people, by the lukewarmness and dissensions of the allied

powers, not by any miracles of generalship or statesmanship on the part of the leaders in Paris. While the revolutionary armies were winning victory after victory in the field, the Jacobin chiefs were largely occupied in sending each other to the guillotine. Little more than a year after its inception the Jacobin regime practically committed suicide, when Robespierre followed most of his colleagues to the scaffold. The collapse of the radical government thus came about not through pressure from without or revolt from within, but solely as a consequence of factional internal quarrels growing out of personalities rather than out of principles. And with the fall of Robespierre and the reaction under the Directory, the possibility of establishing and maintaining a radical government with the support of the majority of the French people passed away. For one of the outstanding results of the Revolution was the breaking of the alliance between the Parisian workers and the peasants.

The peasant's attitude towards the Revolution was quite simple. He was determined to secure a fair share of the seigneur's land, free from the oppressive dues and burdens of feudalism. To the conflicting political theories of royalists, constitutional monarchists, Girondists, and Jacobins he was profoundly indifferent. He was willing to support any government that would protect him in his newly acquired land and would not tax him too heavily. Hence it is easy to understand at once the tenacity with which he resisted the return of the emigres, who wished to take back the land, and the apathy which he exhibited towards the most sweeping political changes which did not affect his economic status. The Jacobins gave way to the Directory; the Directory was supplanted by Napoleon; Napoleon was succeeded by the Bourbons; but the peasant retained his land.

The deposition of Charles X in 1830 scarcely assumed the proportions of a civil war. All classes of the French people were tired of the vain, stupid, tyrannical old man; and his removal and the substitution of Louis Philippe were accomplished with little violence, although the retention of the monarchy was a sore blow to many of the ardent republicans who had fought on the barricades. It was in 1848 that the new political orientation of the peasants made itself manifest. In the fighting which raged for several days between the workers and the bourgeois guards of the National Assembly in the streets of Paris the peasants openly sided with the

latter. As Professor Davis says, the fighting of June 1848 was "a case of the working quarters of Paris against nearly all the rest of France." Reinforcements hurried up from the provinces to assist the Paris bourgeoisie in making an end of the radicals. A republican government with leanings towards communism, which demanded high taxes for the carrying out of elaborate social reforms, which was even accused of contemplating a division of the land, was altogether abhorrent to the new generation of thrifty peasants.

The final revolutionary uprising of the Parisian workers took place in 1871. The disasters and humiliations of the war with Germany contributed largely to the immediate outbreak. But the seizure of power by the Communists represented the final act in the prolonged drama of civil war. For the last time the Faubourg Saint Antoine attempted to control the destiny of France. The response of the provinces was swift and pitiless. The peasant soldiers who formed the bulk of MacMahon's army stormed Paris and gave Jacobinism its death-blow. The revolt which had lasted for almost a century came to an end; the working-class population of Paris could no longer withstand the hostility of the rest of France. The descendants of the men who had led the way in burning up title-deeds and displaying contempt for the seigneurs' property rights in the days of the Revolution proved most zealous in upholding the existing order against a new revolutionary dispensation.

So far as there is any lesson in the attitude of the peasants during the French revolutionary era, it is not favorable to the ultimate triumph of communism. The peasants remained good radicals only so long as they were quite landless and destitute. As soon as they gained secure possession of their little farms they became as respectable, as conservative, as tenacious of the rights of property as any great landowner or millionaire. A comparison between what has happened in France and what is likely to happen in Russia is necessarily vague and imperfect. But, unless the Bolsheviks prove more successful apostles of communism than the Jacobins, it seems likely that a period of private land-ownership will make the Russian moujiks as conservative as their French brethren.

WILLIAM HENRY CHAMBERLIN

THE WOMAN OF IHORNDEN

THE CHALLENGE TO SIRIUS. *By Sheila Kaye-Smith.*
12mo. 442 pages. E. P. Dutton & Company. New
York.

THE FOUR ROADS. *Sheila Kaye-Smith.* 12mo. 320
pages. George H. Doran. New York.

MODERN art subsists to a remarkable extent by taking in its own washing. Novelists adopt poets for heroes, who write sonnets on pictures, for which musicians compose orchestral settings. Painters contribute fantastic portraits of all these folks and become in turn the heroes of new novels; the circle is complete. Think over the list of Mr. Cannan's chief characters, or Miss Sinclair's, or Romain Rolland's. It is true of course that an occasional hero is free from the taint of art; he is always different, however, from the mass of men, having at least the artistic sensibilities. Sometimes an author dives into the sea of life and grasps an authentic, unliterary experience; at such occasions we have reason to be grateful. Sheila Kaye-Smith has made the plunge and returned tightly clutching a bit of soil.

No wonder she prizes her discovery, for the soil is not merely the background of her novels; it serves also to motivate the actions of her characters; in fact the earth of Sussex might be called the chief of her dramatis personae. It is not by oversight that her heroes are never allowed to love a woman very strongly. The real affection is for the ground itself. No more is it accidental that Miss Kaye-Smith grows impassioned only when she describes a landscape, analyzing her characters as coldly as if they were mathematical theorems. She has laid claim to a corner of England, but her ownership is one of the soil alone; with the ways of its inhabitants she has little sympathy.

There is, on the border of Kent and Sussex, a district of hillocks and spongy pastures, with farms caught in a web of little, twisting lanes. Here blooms a riot of wild plants—"bright colours and soft pungent smells, like wasp-thridden apples lying in the grass. The

barns with their tarred walls and great waving sprawls of roof, the oast-houses with their red cones and white cowls, are all so many fungus growths, pushed up by the soil rather than built by men." It is this country which she has chosen for her own. At first she confined herself to it rigorously. Later she has dared occasional expeditions into the outer world, but she has not yet learned to keep her footing on other ground than Sussex.

Especially is this evident in *The Challenge to Sirius*. The novel is long and inchoate, bound together only by the fact that it is the biography of Frank Rainger; while he, in turn, is convincing only when he moves against a south-English background. Rainger spends his boyhood and adolescence in the Isle of Oxney, "a little pip of a county wedged between Sussex and Kent." There he returns, a man in his fifties, to marry his first love and settle down. The interval is taken up with a London sojourn—of which Miss Kaye-Smith gives a brilliant and thoroughly second-rate account—a history of the Civil War from Pittsburg Landing to Atlanta, and a final interlude of eleven years in Yucatan.

An English view of the War of the Rebellion is always fascinating to the American reader. Here Miss Kaye-Smith is safe but not inspired. She wisely lays stress more on the general features of the campaigns than on the reactions of the individual soldier; these remain somewhat of a closed book to women. She is less discreet when she gives herself free rein on Southern landscapes. Evidently she has gained her knowledge of them through textbooks of botany. Frank, escaping from the Union forces, makes his way through a jungle of Indian pipe and sumach. He hides from his pursuers behind a pokeberry bush! and at last floats down the Suwanee River, breathing in the heavy scents of orange-flowers, syringa, oleander, and myrtle, and watching the delicate palm-fronds outlined against the stars. . . . It is beautiful, it is exotic, but it reminds one more of Chateaubriand than of Georgia. More real is the portrait of the planter-at-arms, Zollicoffer, and especially that of Lorena Middleton; she is a pressed flower of the Old South.

The scenes in the Isle of Oxney show more accuracy. Tom Coalbrun and his lumpish brother Dave; Maggie, whom Frank Rainger loves mildly and persistently—"She was habit and hunger like his daily bread"—these people are depicted patiently, exactly, and with a skill which Miss Kaye-Smith surpasses only in her descriptions of

the fields of marl which are their livelihood. It is from the style, however, that the volume derives much of its worth. This quality is one of which our generation seems almost unconscious. We know that George Moore writes good prose—he has told us so himself. Critics trumpet the perfection of Conrad in our ears. Appreciation of the cadenced beauty which characterizes *The Challenge to Sirius*, however, rests on no publicity methods. The ideas which Miss Kaye-Smith expresses are often banal—she is naively indifferent to her own platitudes—but the sentences that clothe them are hammered in bronze; each one perfect, each sufficient to itself.

The flux and reflux of sentences such as these makes beautiful the prose of *The Four Roads*. Here the subject is Sussex in wartime. One hears at first the boom of ghostly artillery across the Channel as a dissonance in the usual hum of afternoon. Later it grows louder, threatening to destroy utterly this peaceful countryside. Sussex triumphs over the guns; with the young men killed, there is left another generation to grasp the warm plough-handles that the fathers had dropped. The victory, however, is precarious, and the new Sussex is not the peaceful county of Victoria's reign that sowed and reaped and voted Tory to keep the prices up.

As a novel *The Four Roads* is almost everything that its precursor was not. The real hero is a village instead of one man; despite this fact, the story is distinctly of a single piece. One does not pick many flaws; neither does one grow especially enthusiastic. Tom Beatup and his stolid, maternal Thyrza; Tom's younger brothers; Jerry, the scapegrace son of the Nonconformist parson and a gypsy woman from Ithornden: all these characters are delineated with infinite understanding but without real sympathy. Miss Kaye-Smith, near as she is to the heart of Sussex, is a stranger to its people, much like the woman of Ithornden who married there and died and was a friend only to the wild twisting roads. Or she is like the Frank Rainger of the earlier volume, who, she says, "had sunk into the fibre of Moon's Green like a nail embedded in the live trunk of an oak. He would always be different in substance from his surroundings."

This charge of lack of sympathy can hardly be brought against her portrait of the Reverend Mr. Sumption. A gaunt, lonely Baptist, he too was a stranger to the folk among whom he lived. His son, his flock, his faith: one after another the war deprives him of

these; finally he discovers salvation in physical labour. On a few such characters as this, on her style, and above everything else, on her feelings of kinship with a few square miles of Sussex earth, Miss Kaye-Smith can justly base a claim to a rank beside the dozen or half-dozen best novelists of her generation.

Yet if she ranks with the Young Englishmen, she is not one of them. There is a peculiar datelessness about her work that separates her from the experiments and bustling tract-novels of her contemporaries. I do not mean by this that she is not a very modern young woman, nor to hint that she does not possess perfect acquaintance with the literary movements of the last decade. At times she writes two or three paragraphs of Galsworthy; there is a chapter in *The Four Roads* that is utterly Wellsian; but these passages seem excrescences. At their best her novels partake of the timelessness of the subject; she is Sussex rather than Victorian or Georgian. The limits of her development are of the same nature; her art is bounded not so much by her understanding, by her technique, as geographically by the River Rother and the Royal Military Canal.

MALCOLM COWLEY

THE STRUCTURE OF CHINESE POETRY

MORE TRANSLATIONS FROM THE CHINESE. *By Arthur Waley. 8vo. 144 pages. Alfred A. Knopf. New York.*

IN the preface to Mr. Waley's new volume of translations there is a remark to the effect that no reviewer treated his earlier book, *170 Chinese Poems*, as an experiment in English unrhymed verse, though this was the aspect of it which most interested the writer.

This remark is perfectly just. No one did treat Mr. Waley's earlier translations as examples of unrhymed versification. We, with our Occidental eyes, are so dazzled with the substance of Chinese poetry, as Mr. Waley has revealed it to us, the seemingly pellucid simplicity concealing great depths of feeling, as not to ask ourselves the question of how it is done. Mr. Waley may be excused his irritation at our blindness in this respect. For he has evolved a metre and style which show, in so far as one language can show the structure of another, exactly how the Chinese poets worked. And as the Chinese poets themselves undoubtedly set higher value on technique than on subject-matter, it is certainly necessary to analyze the technique of these translations, in order to understand one reason for the strange charm of Chinese poetry.

Chinese poetry is based on a parallelism of thought and of substance. Even in its early examples, this parallelism is crudely manifest. This parallelism runs in fact not only through Chinese poetry but Chinese philosophy and religion. It corresponds to a deep-seated instinct in the Oriental mind. We Occidentals, when we make buildings, pictures, poems, music, or philosophic systems, seek to vary; the Oriental seeks to repeat. It is as if he could not create a form, a sound, a thought, without creating also its echo. For this reason, Chinese poetry is without climax; for this reason also (much like Chinese painting) it compensates for absence of climax by sheer breadth of handling.

As Mr. Waley in the introduction to his first book of translations pointed out, this parallelism did not come to birth all at once. Indeed, the Chinese critics themselves have recognized two species of poetry—poetry written in the Old Style (*Ku-shih*), which lasted up

to the fourth century A.D., and poetry written in the New Style (Lu-shih—or “strictly regulated”), which gradually evolved from the fourth to the eighth centuries A.D., reaching its culmination in the works of T’ang poets, who are, by common consent, the great masters of the art of Chinese Poetry. And since it is largely these T’ang poets whom Mr. Waley has chosen to translate, it is quite evident that, for the most part, his translations reproduce, so far as possible, the forms of this “new” or strictly regulated style.

Now, as Mr. Waley has told us, this style, although the divisions between it and the earlier style are often arbitrary (which is quite natural, since it grew out of the earlier style), is marked by a parallelism omnipresent not only in the words of the couplets, but extending even to the arrangement of the “tones” (which are arranged in pairs), and also in the vowel-assonance nature of the rhymes, while in quatrains, where two lines do not rhyme, these lines must end on the opposite tone to the rhyme! During the T’ang period all these restrictions of form did not prevent poets from taking considerable licenses; but with the succeeding age, they became even more hampering and complicated, which led directly to the decline of Chinese poetry. Let us take an example from Mr. Waley, and see how his method reproduces that of the Chinese:

THE CRANES

By Po Chū-i

The western wind has blown but a few days;
 Yet the first leaf already flies from the bough.
 On the drying paths I walk in my thin shoes;
 In the first cold I have donned my quilted coat.
 Through shallow ditches the floods are clearing away;
 Through sparse bamboos trickles a slanting light.
 In the early dusk, down an alley of green moss,
 The garden-boy is leading the cranes home.

There can be no doubt that this poem is a picture of early autumn. How is that picture achieved? By a series of statements each one of which is not only set against the other, but contradicts the other. For instance, “The western wind has blown but a few

days"; so summer is not over! "Yet the first leaf already flies from the bough"; so autumn has come, after all. "On the drying paths I walk in my thin shoes"—it is not cold; "In the first cold I have donned my quilted coat"—but it is rather chilly. "Through shallow ditches the floods are clearing away"—fine weather; "Through sparse bamboos trickles a slanting light"—but winter is coming. As for the last two lines, they simply complete the picture sketched out in these oppositions; they give us the relation of all these details to each other. The mind is focussed at the close in a single definite fact—autumn evening.

As if to show us how near this method is to the Chinese, Mr. Waley has given us in his introduction this specimen of a poem literally translated:

EVENING

Water's colour at dusk still white:
 Sunset's glow in-the-dark gradually nil.
 Windy lotus shakes (like) broken fan,
 Wave-moon stirs (like) string (of) jewels.
 Crickets chirping answer one another,
 Mandarin-ducks sleep, not alone.
 Little servant repeatedly announces night;
 Returning steps still hesitate.

Here we have the Chinese technique *in excelsis*. A set of definite concrete statements are set against each other in balanced order to convey a perfectly abstract idea. We dull Occidentals have to be told that the poet who wrote this was sixty-three years of age. Then we see that the "returning steps" that "still hesitate" are those of the poet himself, and that his leisurely old age is contrasted throughout with the servant-girl's youth—she is impatient to get to bed; but, as Po Chü-i might say, "Water's colour at dusk is still white, but sunset's glow in the dark is gradually nil"; and if this statement does not receive an additional illumination from the last two lines, then you must be totally insensible either to the charm or to the substance of Chinese poetry.

I have dealt with this topic to some extent, as it is important. Indeed, the importance of the Chinese poets is that they came nearest of all poets to that complete fusion of substance and form which is

the essence of a great style. Indeed, to them, substance is important only in so far as it permits form to be given it. Their art is an art of illuminating. Nothing is permitted to disturb the harmony of the picture. Technically, I have no doubt that the Chinese are in every respect our superiors, but their technique excludes the possibility of climax. Rather do they seek completion, the prolongation of those mental echoes which their pictures gradually evoke. In the hands of Mr. Waley (and I might almost say in his hands alone) in this respect they are completely successful.

I have left out of account two of the most interesting things in this volume: a short story by Yüan Chên, and a poem by Ch'ü Yüan. The former is a poet celebrated as a friend of Mr. Waley's favourite poet Po Chü-i, who, as a poet, was so famous for the brilliance of his pathetic pieces that he was held to have invented a new style. Mr. Waley gives us one capable specimen of his poetry, and also this short story, the end of which springs an ironic surprise upon us so definitely that we wonder anew at the Chinese making artistic use of a device which we thought originated with O. Henry. The other, the poem by Ch'ü Yüan, is, so far, Mr. Waley's masterpiece as a translator. Its author, born in the troublous times of the Feudal States, before the establishment of the Han dynasty, is celebrated in China not only as the type of a loyal minister, but as the country's first great poet. In accordance with the undeveloped state of the poetical art in his time, he was a vers-librist. Mr. Waley translates one of his poems, *The Great Summons*, in shifting irregular metres, with tremendous use of refrain, and imagery which suggests that in this poet China has her counterpart of Poe and Coleridge. As I have said, this is Mr. Waley's masterpiece as a translator so far; but let us hope that he will not be deterred by Legge's predecessorship from giving us, in yet another volume, Ch'ü Yüan's greatest poem, the *Li Sao*, or *Falling in Trouble*.

JOHN GOULD FLETCHER

PREJUDICES

PREJUDICES. *First Series.* By H. L. Mencken. 12mo.
254 pages. Alfred A. Knopf. New York.

A CERTAIN king once gave to three of his courtiers, in order to determine their wisdom, three hollow crystal globes which were filled with a golden wine and sealed so that none of the fluid might escape therefrom.

Said the first courtier to himself:

"Wine is to be drunk. I will break the glass and taste this stuff, for I am sure it will prove very excellent on the tongue."

So he broke his crystal globe, and before he could catch any of the wine it was spilled upon the ground.

Said the second courtier to himself:

"This crystal of mine is beautiful to the eye, but it is stained inside with a yellow liquid. If I remove the liquid my crystal globe will then be transparent and exquisite."

And, boring a small hole in the side of it, he broke his globe into a thousand fragments.

Said the third courtier to himself:

"This crystal which the king has given me is round like the dome of the sky. Moreover, it is filled with a golden wine which, if drunk, would doubtless make me happy for an hour but which may not be removed, I fear, without breaking the glass and spilling the wine upon the ground. Therefore I will only hang my globe in my window that, seeing it each morning, I may contemplate infinity and be drunk in my imagination on the wine which is within."

And he hung the king's gift in his window.

And when the king saw what the courtier had done he was pleased. And he said to the courtier:

"For your wisdom and understanding you shall be rewarded. I hereby make you the First Critic of the Land."

"Criticism is the last of all literary forms; it will perhaps end by absorbing them all. It is admirably adapted to a very civilized society whose memories are rich and whose traditions are already age-

old. It is peculiarly suited to a curious, learned, and polished race of men. In order that it may prosper it demands more cultivation than all other literary forms."

So, once upon a time, spake Anatole France; and if that curious, learned, and polished Frenchman spake accurately it is scarcely surprising that literary criticism in the United States, if not a lost art, is one which only tentatively has been found. For American traditions are young, American society is but superficially civilized, and American memories are rich principally in terms of Wall Street and the Stock Exchange. It is true that we have produced such men as Whitman, Poe, and Emerson. It is true, also, that we have bred Abraham Lincoln and Samuel Clemens—one the author of an immortal prose-poem, the other the author of *Huckleberry Finn*. It is likewise true that we are far from hostile to the published dreams of an ancient world: we glibly read Plato and Nietzsche and Shakespeare and Shaw and Shelley; and, at least when our bugles are mute and our flags are furled in peace, we listen as hungrily to Beethoven and Wagner as we do to Bizet and Sir Edward Elgar. We are, in fact, taken by and large, most generous patrons of the arts; for we build museums, erect libraries, construct theatres, endow orchestras, and generally support the aesthetic edifices with a hand seldom closed in avarice and often opened wide in opulence. We let few chances slip of dropping several million dollars in the hat of a passing band of *skomorokhi*, and we count that day lost whose low-descending sun views from our pocket-books no aesthetic benefaction done.

But one fact remains: our art is almost entirely imported. Our dreams are not dreamed, but bought. Our museums, libraries, theatres, orchestras, and aesthetic edifices generally, are erected by our own hands—and then filled with the treasures of other men. As yet the United States Senate has produced for us neither a Burke nor a Macaulay; St. Patrick's Cathedral has given us neither a Rubens nor a Michelangelo; our slums breed no Balzacs or Zolas; and our aristocracy has failed to furnish us with a single Chopin, Liszt, or Tchaikowsky. At times, we may have seemed to be, artistically, a precociously fecund race. But if we have given this impression we have done so, with very few exceptions, by merely playing foster-mother to the arts. We have seldom conceived beauty or

borne it in travail and patient sorrow: for the most part we have bought beauty outright and dandled it proudly on our knee.

In the face, then, of this painful shortage of native material on which a critic may judiciously engage his teeth, it is not astonishing that most of our current criticism should be chiefly a garrulous expression of starvation. Without national maturity you cannot have art, and without art you cannot have an adequate appreciation or criticism of art. That we possess any critics at all is, indeed, more a matter for amazement than that the majority of our critics are cadaverous in phrase and lean in understanding. For, on the one hand, they are confronted by the bleak and rocky Charybdis of creative aridity; and, on the other, they are buffeted and tossed about, as in a storm, by the Scylla of popular puritanical opinion.

This whirlpool of popular opinion is, in truth, a more vicious and dangerous phenomenon than even those barren cliffs beyond which the American critic must swim before reaching the shores of his Sicily; for it is formed of a watery emotionalism whipped high and furious by the winds of puritanical doctrine. And though a critic may, with no very serious difficulty, steer clear of such barren promontories as, say, the novels of Robert Chambers or Elinor Glyn, he will find himself being sucked down, if he is not a careful navigator, in the maelstrom made for his destruction by the preachers of art-for-morality's-sake, of art-for-Anthony-Comstock's-sake, of art-for-everyone's-and-everything's-sake except the artist and his art.

Now, the belief that art should teach a fine moral lesson has, of course, a certain excuse for existence. As long as men believe that it is preferable to tell the truth rather than to lie, as long as men visit condemnation on thieves and encomiums on public benefactors—as long, in brief, as some modes of conduct are considered right and others wrong, so long are the pages of literature a fit and proper place for the dramatization of ethical ideas. The error of the doctrine of art-for-morality's-sake lies not in asking literature to bespeak the cause of righteousness; it lies in demanding that literature bespeak the cause of nothing else. And the error of contemporary criticism lies, likewise, in stimulating this one-sided demand for soothing syrups and teething-rings and failing to cry out always for the whole apothecary shop.

Let us take an example. You are, let us say, a high-minded citizen of the United States, intent on national security and the sanc-

tity of the Seventh Mosaic Law. Full of democratic idealism and a respect for American womanhood, you observe, in a book you are reading, that a German spy, by name Schmidt, has plotted for the overthrow of the American Government and has succeeded, incidentally, in effecting the ruin of a beautiful American girl. You are disgusted. You are repelled. You are horrified. And as a loyal citizen of the United States you are patriotically thrilled to learn that this same German spy is captured on page 256, sentenced on page 258, shot on page 281, and buried without honours on page 285. Your patriotic soul, forsooth, probably soars into the very empyrean on discovering that so dastardly a criminal has come to so judicious and timely an end. But as an artist, as a critic, even as an intelligent reader, do you care a whit whether Schmidt is dead or alive? You do not. For as an artist, as a critic, or as an intelligent reader your politics are neither German nor American, and your morals are as international as the sun. You may be incidentally pleased over the vindication of some of your personal beliefs. But this pleasure is merely the pleasure of the patriot and the moralizer. In so far as you are an artist your delight is solely in the clash of idea with idea, the impact of personality on personality, and the battle of creed against creed. And you realize that to demand the downfall of iniquity and the triumph of good, as most of our critics are fond of doing, is equivalent to saying that minor keys in music are very sad, that sadness often leads to suicide, and that Beethoven's Fifth Symphony, being in the minor mode, should therefore be suppressed at once because it tends to depopulate the world.

Such juvenile standards of art criticism are not merely prevalent in this country: they are well-nigh universal. Fortunately, for every war there is a hero, for every Hellespont there is a Leander, and at every critical feast there is at least one guest who knows how to handle a fork. Mr. Mencken's table manners are frequently astonishing to the *epigoni* of letters, but his skill in disposing of current literature by the mouthful is so obviously neat and effective as to disarm reproach with admiration. Finding the fare good, he has bluntly shaken his head in approval; finding the fare tolerable, he has eaten it with a growl; finding the fare atrocious, he has overturned the table entirely and brought all the china crashing to the floor. His critical vehemence is sometimes alarming. But it always is healthy, for it bespeaks an insatiable appetite for nourishment, as

well as an open demand for the best in the larder, that seldom has been exhibited either this side of the Atlantic or of the Nineteenth Century. The author of *Prejudices* realizes that to err is human. He knows, also, that critically to forgive is asinine. Therefore he never forgives, never cleans his plate for the sake of good form, never makes pretty farewell speeches about having had a good time. If the food pleases him—as it does occasionally—he eats it at once and holds out his plate for more. If it displeases him, on the contrary—and this happens less occasionally—he rejects it straightway and stormily goes home to bed. And if the world hears promptly of his pleasure, the very stars are made privy to his pain.

There is, as I have said, refreshing honesty in this thunderous approval and denunciation of current American literature. It is honesty, moreover, that has seldom been matched either here or abroad. Poe, grinding his heel in the dust to hollow out a grave for Longfellow, was not more courageous than Mr. Mencken, who has struck down by name any of his contemporaries whom he considers silly, weak, or ephemeral. Nor is his onslaught merely brutal. His bludgeon is fitted with a keen blade. If he lived in the Eighteenth Century and wrote with a quill, he would, one feels, be sharpening it constantly. His opinions are edged with a remarkably penetrating style; and there is weight behind his blow no less certainly than there is a knife in front of his axe-head.

With such critical equipment a man is certain to travel far. That Mr. Mencken has travelled farther in his examination of present-day literatures than any other American, excepting perhaps Mr. Huneker, is a statement which only the timid would end with an interrogation mark and only the blind would not begin at all. That he suffers from a defect, however, which cripples many of his judgments and warps no inconsiderable part of his views is a statement which equally demands the light. And the humour and tragedy of this particular shortcoming are born of the fact that the very evil of Puritanism which Mr. Mencken continually embattles has infected him locally with a disease which, if less dangerous, is no less virulent than the one he is seeking to destroy. It is almost as though, going forth to kill the typhus germ, he had inadvertently contracted malaria of the soul. His actual theories of criticism are sound; and his elucidation of the holy business of critics, at the beginning of the volume, is as compact and forceful an example of zetetical writing

as his later review of Elsie Clews Parsons' *Fear and Conventionality*, and his mordant exposure of Clayton Hamilton. It is when he sets out to apply these theories that all his pent-up hatred of Presbyteranism, Puritanism, and the seven deadly virtues comes gushing out in a stream of blinding indignation. There is not room here, unfortunately, to notice the men he douses under it or the paradoxical manner in which the hose sometimes gets partially turned on himself. I can only advise you to read the book through for yourself, turning to page 16, where he observes, outraged, that " 'This girl is pretty,' says the artist. 'But she has left off her undershirt,' protests the head-master," and do your own wondering as to whether or not, if Mr. Mencken took a part in the conversation, it would not run: " 'This girl is pretty,' says the artist. 'But she has put her undershirt on!'"

Or, turning to page 26, conclude for yourself if a critic, reviewing the later novels of H. G. Wells, and announcing that "once a critic begins to suffer from a messianic delusion his days as a serious artist are ended," might not with equal propriety develop that aesthetic formula and state frankly that "once a critic begins to suffer from a diabolic delusion his days as a bigoted critic are begun."

But these exterior flaws, after all, are more the flaws of critical vehemence than of actual critical vice. They mar the surface of Mr. Mencken's prejudices, but they are cracks which give outer indications of an internal, high-pressure revolt against the stupidities of the day. They show that his prejudices, inside, are really opinions.

Those opinions are not always tempered with tolerance, and his defence of the Goethe-Arnold-Spingarn-Croce theory of aesthetics sometimes talks so loud, as Emerson would have put it, that you cannot quite hear what it says. But again this is probably less Mr. Mencken's fault than the fault of the land and age in which he lives. In a country which has produced little art you cannot expect much criticism of art that is sober, mature, or restrained. In such a land you should be grateful if occasionally you discover one more man who, if only at times, is content to hang the crystal globes of literature in his window and say, looking at them without rancour and with very little impatience, "*Je n'impose rien; Je ne purpose rien; J'expose.*"

WINTHROP PARKHURST

BLINDS DOWN!

THE FACE OF THE WORLD. By Johan Bojer. 12mo.
328 pages. Moffat Tard & Company. New York.

THE Face of the World, even more than The Great Hunger, deals with matters for which the American is likely to have small patience, if any ear at all. He is, in the first place, scarcely concerned with such recondite problems as the insatiable hunger for universality of consciousness or with the struggle to maintain a world conscience. Why the hero of The Great Hunger should keep on chasing a rainbow like that vision of his, with a good wife and a fine home, even after he has lost his solid fortune, or why Harold Mark in The Face of the World should worry himself into neglect of his profession, loss of his wife, and premature old age, and bring a great catastrophe upon a decent town through his fretting over what was happening to the poor Armenians in Turkey or the natives of Zanzibar or the children of the Dead End, are concerns not of the news-sheets or the tickers but of an extremely subjective life which, it has long since been clear, pioneering, world-wilderness-subduing America has had no time for.

Harold Mark is one who is continually sinking into the sea of humanity, losing himself in the soul of all mankind, hypnotized by the rolling panorama of life that sweeps over the face of the world. This obsessive conscience of unity and responsibility with all men drives him from pillar to post, leaves him without roots in the ordinary soil of life, turns all the things of common value to dross in his hands, and finally gives him, indeed, the relative character of a menace to society. He finds no release in vigorous action; his profession, medicine, comes to be meaningless; he does not even try to hold his good, life-loving and life-accepting wife.

And when he tries to root himself again, withdraw to his native village, a little corner of life where he can work and live in peace, he finds only new demands upon his conscience. Ivar, the young fellow-townsmen of Mark, drawn relentlessly to disaster by a fruitless infatuation, has Mark's brooding fatality and sharpens the other horn of the dilemma in which Mark struggles. It seems fatal to take the world upon one's shoulders, but the catastrophe which the pathetic love-maddened Ivar brings upon the town by burning it to

the ground along with Mark's hospital, shows how equally if not more futile it is to try to take upon oneself the burden of another man's soul. It turns to mockery the comforting thought with which Mark had come back to his mother and his town: "All honour to the happy people with small horizon, with blinds down towards the world and the great sea, and the windows open to a tiny garden."

One can scarcely imagine Harold Mark interesting with any great degree of sympathy the American fiction reader. Yet, if we but knew it, his problem is one that, day by day, is coming more sharply home to America and Americans. Here we were, we happy people with small horizon, with blinds down toward the world. Is it the better part of life as a nation that we say with a laugh in the face of the world, "Come, let us cultivate our garden"? The garden has been so fair, so flowing with milk and honey; it has been so cosy behind the lowered blinds. And we have our domestic Ivars to help.

A temptation, but human. Life would be a bleak and wind-torn thing if it were not for the blinds we can fortunately pull down upon some of its horizons. Only for those nations and people with the sturdiest of hearts and the most comprehending and unflinching of eyes is it given to go through life with all the windows of their minds open and the blinds of their spirits up. The chances are nine out of ten that it may accurately be said of the man walking ahead of you in the street, "There is nothing he wants to know." Whether he is the happier man for it, happier that he is not driven by some merciless impulse to push the boundaries of his knowledge and sympathy even farther out, over mankind, beyond the stars—this is the question embodied in the story of Harold Mark.

Are dreams and noble altruisms crimes? Is not the everyday reality of work ultimate? Is one to take upon oneself the burdens of the world or to do that task which lies nearest one in humility and faith? Faith, perhaps; yes, but in what? Mark finds an intellectual resolution of the problem under the inspiration of the Ninth Symphony. It is a weak one and a poor one, but because it is one, and because it is the only sort of answer we get out of life, we put the book down with considerably better feeling than if the author had ended by having Mark join the Royal Fusiliers and find his salvation making the world safe, and so forth. That is one sort of conscience even the American reader would have little patience with, now.

VIRGIL JORDAN

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